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ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

SWANSTON EDITION

VOLUME XVI

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R. L. S. IN APEMAMA ISLAND: A DEVIL-PRIEST MAKING INCANTATIONS

THE WORKS OF
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

VOLUME SIXTEEN

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RECORDS OF
A FAMILY OF ENGINEERS

RECORDS OF
A FAMILY OF ENGINEERS

INTRODUCTION

THE SURNAME OF STEVENSON

From the thirteenth century onwards, the name, under the various disguises of Stevinstoun, Stevensoun, Stevensonne, Stenesone, and Stewinsoune, spread across Scotland from the mouth of the Firth of Forth to the mouth of the Firth of Clyde. Four times at least it occurs as a place-name. There is a parish of Stevenston in Cunningham ; a second place of the name in the Barony of Bothwell in Lanark ; a third on Lyne, above Drochil Castle ; the fourth on the Tyne, near Traprain Law. Stevenson of Stevenson (co. Lanark) swore fealty to Edward I. in 1296, and the last of that family died after the Restoration. Stevensons of Hirdmanshiels, in Midlothian, rode in the Bishops' Raid of Aberlady, served as jurors, stood bail for neighbours—Hunter of Polwood, for instance—and became extinct about the same period, or possibly earlier. A Stevenson of Luthrie and another of Pitroddie make their bows, give their names, and vanish. And by the year 1700 it does not appear that any acre of Scots land was vested in any Stevenson.[1]

Here is, so far, a melancholy picture of backward

[1] An error : Stevensons owned at this date the barony of Dolphingston in Haddingtonshire, Montgrennan in Ayrshire, and several other lesser places.

progress, and a family posting towards extinction. But the law (however administered, and I am bound to aver that, in Scotland "it couldna weel be waur") acts as a kind of dredge, and with dispassionate impartiality brings up into the light of day, and shows us for a moment, in the jury-box or on the gallows, the creeping things of the past. By these broken glimpses we are able to trace the existence of many other and more inglorious Stevensons, picking a private way through the brawl that makes Scots history. They were members of Parliament for Peebles, Stirling, Pittenweem, Kilrenny, and Inverurie. We find them burgesses of Edinburgh; indwellers in Biggar, Perth, and Dalkeith. Thomas was the forester of Newbattle Park, Gavin was a baker, John a maltman, Francis a chirurgeon, and "Schir William" a priest. In the feuds of Humes and Heatleys, Cunninghams, Montgomeries, Mures, Ogilvies, and Turnbulls, we find them inconspicuously involved, and apparently getting rather better than they gave. Schir William (reverend gentleman) was cruellie slaughtered on the Links of Kincraig in 1532; James ("in the mill-town of Roberton"), murdered in 1590; Archibald ("in Gallowfarren"), killed with shots of pistols and hagbuts in 1608. Three violent deaths in about seventy years, against which we can only put the case of Thomas, servant to Hume of Cowden Knowes, who was arraigned with his two young masters for the death of the Bastard of Mellerstanes in 1569. John ("in Dalkeith") stood sentry without Holyrood while the banded lords were despatching Rizzio within. William, at the ringing of Perth bell, ran before Gowrie House "with ane sword, and, entering to the yearde, saw George Craiggingilt with ane twa-handit sword and utheris nychtbouris; at quilk time James Boig cryit ower ane wynds, 'Awa hame! ye will all be hangit'"—a piece of advice which William took, and immediately "depairtit." John got a maid with child to him in Biggar, and seemingly deserted her; she was hanged on the Castle Hill for infanticide, June 1614;

and Martin, elder in Dalkeith, eternally disgraced the name by signing witness in a witch trial, 1661. These are two of our black sheep.[1] Under the Restoration, one Stevenson was a bailie in Edinburgh, and another the lessee of the Canonmills. There were at the same period two physicians of the name in Edinburgh, one of whom, Dr. Archibald, appears to have been a famous man in his day and generation. The Court had continual need of him; it was he who reported, for instance, on the state of Rumbold; and he was for some time in the enjoyment of a pension of a thousand pounds Scots (about eighty pounds sterling) at a time when five hundred pounds is described as "an opulent future." I do not know if I should be glad or sorry that he failed to keep favour; but on 6th January 1682 (rather a cheerless New Year's present) his pension was expunged.[2] There need be no doubt, at least, of my exultation at the fact that he was knighted and recorded arms. Not quite so genteel, but still in public life, Hugh was Under-Clerk to the Privy Council, and liked being so extremely. I gather this from his conduct in September 1681, when, with all the lords and their servants, he took the woful and soul-destroying Test, swearing it "word by word upon his knees." And, behold! it was in vain, for Hugh was turned out of his small post in 1684.[3] Sir Archibald and Hugh were both plainly inclined to be trimmers; but there was one witness of the name of Stevenson who held high the banner of the Covenant—John, "Land-Labourer,[4] in the parish of Daily, in Carrick," that "eminently pious man." He seems to have been a poor sickly soul, and shows himself disabled with scrofula, and prostrate and groaning aloud with fever; but the enthusiasm of the martyr burned high within him.

[1] Pitcairn's "Criminal Trials," at large.—[R. L. S.]
[2] Fountainhall's "Decisions," vol. i. pp. 56, 132, 186, 204, 368. —[R. L. S.]
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 158, 299.—[R. L. S.]
[4] Working farmer: Fr. *laboureur.*

" I was made to take joyfully the spoiling of my goods, and with pleasure for His name's sake wandered in deserts and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. I lay four months in the coldest season of the year in a hay-stack in my father's garden, and a whole February in the open fields not far from Camragen, and this I did without the least prejudice from the night air ; one night, when lying in the fields near to the Carrick-Miln, I was all covered with snow in the morning. Many nights have I lain with pleasure in the churchyard of Old Daily, and made a grave my pillow ; frequently have I resorted to the old walls about the glen, near to Camragen, and there sweetly rested." The visible hand of God protected and directed him. Dragoons were turned aside from the bramble-bush where he lay hidden. Miracles were performed for his behoof. " I got a horse and a woman to carry the child, and came to the same mountain, where I wandered by the mist before ; it is commonly known by the name of Kellsrhins : when we came to go up the mountain, there came on a great rain, which we thought was the occasion of the child's weeping, and she wept so bitterly, that all we could do could not divert her from it, so that she was ready to burst. When we got to the top of the mountain, where the Lord had been formerly kind to my soul in prayer, I looked round me for a stone, and espying one, I went and brought it. When the woman with me saw me set down the stone, she smiled, and asked what I was going to do with it. I told her I was going to set it up as my Ebenezer, because hitherto, and in that place, the Lord had formerly helped, and I hoped would yet help. The rain still continuing, the child weeping bitterly, I went to prayer, and no sooner did I cry to God, but the child gave over weeping, and when we got up from prayer, the rain was pouring down on every side, but in the way where we were to go there fell not one drop ; the place not rained on was as big as an ordinary avenue." And so great a saint was the natural butt of

Satan's persecutions. "I retired to the fields for secret prayer about midnight. When I went to pray I was much straitened, and could not get one request, but 'Lord pity,' 'Lord help'; this I came over frequently; at length the terror of Satan fell on me in a high degree, and all I could say even then was—'Lord help.' I continued in the duty for some time, notwithstanding of this terror. At length I got up to my feet, and the terror still increased; then the enemy took me by the arm-pits, and seemed to lift me up by my arms. I saw a loch just before me, and I concluded he designed to throw me there by force; and had he got leave to do so, it might have brought a great reproach upon religion."[1] But it was otherwise ordered, and the cause of piety escaped that danger.[2]

On the whole, the Stevensons may be described as decent, reputable folk, following honest trades—millers, maltsters, and doctors, playing the character parts in the Waverley Novels with propriety, if without distinction; and to an orphan looking about him in the world for a potential ancestry, offering a plain and quite unadorned refuge, equally free from shame and glory. John, the land-labourer, is the one living and memorable figure, and he, alas! cannot possibly be more near than a collateral. It was on August 12, 1678, that he heard Mr. John Welsh on the Craigdowhill, and "took the heavens, earth, and sun in the firmament that was shining on us, as also the ambassador who made the offer, and *the clerk who raised the psalms*, to witness that I did give myself away to the Lord in a personal and perpetual covenant never to be forgotten"; and already, in 1675, the birth of my direct ascendant was registered in Glasgow. So that I have been

[1] This John Stevenson was not the only "witness" of the name; other Stevensons were actually killed during the persecutions, in the Glen of Trool, on Pentland, etc.; and it is very possible that the author's own ancestor was one of the mounted party embodied by Muir of Caldwell, only a day too late for Pentland.

[2] Wodrow Society's "Select Biographies," vol. ii.—[R. L. S.]

pursuing ancestors too far down; and John the land-labourer is debarred me, and I must relinquish from the trophies of my house his *rare soul-strengthening and comforting cordial.* It is the same case with the Edinburgh bailie and the miller of the Canonmills, worthy man! and with that public character, Hugh the Under-Clerk, and more than all, with Sir Archibald, the physician, who recorded arms. And I am reduced to a family of inconspicuous maltsters in what was then the clean and handsome little city on the Clyde.

The name has a certain air of being Norse. But the story of Scottish nomenclature is confounded by a continual process of translation and half-translation from the Gaelic which in olden days may have been sometimes reversed. Roy becomes Reid; Gow, Smith. A great Highland clan uses the name of Robertson; a sept in Appin that of Livingstone; Maclean in Glencoe answers to Johnstone at Lockerby. And we find such hybrids as Macalexander for Macallister. There is but one rule to be deduced: that however uncompromisingly Saxon a name may appear, you can never be sure it does not designate a Celt. My great-grandfather wrote the name *Stevenson* but pronounced it *Steenson*, after the fashion of the immortal minstrel in "Redgauntlet"; and this elision of a medial consonant appears a Gaelic process; and, curiously enough, I have come across no less than two Gaelic forms: *John Macstophane cordinerius in Crossraguel*, 1573, and *William M'Steen* in Dunskeith (co. Ross), 1605. Stevenson, Steenson, Macstophane, M'Steen: which is the original? which the translation? Or were these separate creations of the patronymic, some English, some Gaelic? The curiously compact territory in which we find them seated—Ayr, Lanark, Peebles, Stirling, Perth, Fife, and the Lothians—would seem to forbid the supposition.[1]

[1] Though the districts here named are those in which the name of Stevenson is most common, it is in point of fact far more widespread than the text indicates, and occurs from Dumfries and Berwickshire to Aberdeen and Orkney.

" Stevenson—or according to tradition of one of the proscribed of the clan MacGregor, who was born among the willows or in a hill-side sheep-pen—' Son of my love,' a heraldic bar sinister, but history reveals a reason for the birth among the willows far other than the sinister aspect of the name " : these are the dark words of Mr. Cosmo Innes ; but history or tradition, being interrogated, tells a somewhat tangled tale. The heir of Macgregor of Glenorchy, murdered about 1353 by the Argyll Campbells, appears to have been the original " Son of my love " ; and his more loyal clansmen took the name to fight under. It may be supposed the story of their resistance became popular, and the name in some sort identified with the idea of opposition to the Campbells. Twice afterwards, on some renewed aggression, in 1502 and 1552, we find the Macgregors again banding themselves into a sept of " Sons of my love " ; and when the great disaster fell on them in 1603, the whole original legend re-appears, and we have the heir of Alaster of Glenstrae born " among the willows " of a fugitive mother, and the more loyal clansmen again rallying under the name of Stevenson. A story would not be told so often unless it had some base in fact ; nor (if there were no bond at all between the Red Macgregors and the Stevensons) would that extraneous and somewhat uncouth name be so much repeated in the legends of the Children of the Mist.

But I am enabled, by my very lively and obliging correspondent, Mr. George A. Macgregor Stevenson of New York, to give an actual instance. His grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather, and great-great-great-grandfather, all used the names of Macgregor and Stevenson as occasion served ; being perhaps Macgregor by night and Stevenson by day. The great-great-great-grandfather was a mighty man of his hands, marched with the clan in the 'Forty-five, and returned with *spolia opima* in the shape of a sword, which he had wrested from an officer in the retreat, and which is in the possession of my corre-

spondent to this day. His great-grandson (the grandfather of my correspondent), being converted to Methodism by some wayside preacher, discarded in a moment his name, his old nature, and his political principles, and with the zeal of a proselyte sealed his adherence to the Protestant Succession by baptising his next son George. This George became the publisher and editor of the *Wesleyan Times*. His children were brought up in ignorance of their Highland pedigree; and my correspondent was puzzled to overhear his father speak of him as a true Macgregor, and amazed to find, in rummaging about that peaceful and pious house, the sword of the Hanoverian officer. After he was grown up and was better informed of his descent, "I frequently asked my father," he writes, "why he did not use the name of Macgregor; his replies were significant, and give a picture of the man: 'It isn't a good *Methodist* name. *You* can use it, but it will do you no *good*.' Yet the old gentleman, by way of pleasantry, used to announce himself to friends as 'Colonel Macgregor.'"

Here, then, are certain Macgregors habitually using the name of Stevenson, and at last, under the influence of Methodism, adopting it entirely. Doubtless a proscribed clan could not be particular; they took a name as a man takes an umbrella against a shower; as Rob Roy took Campbell, and his son took Drummond. But this case is different; Stevenson was not taken and left—it was consistently adhered to. It does not in the least follow that all Stevensons are of the clan Alpin; but it does follow that some may be. And I cannot conceal from myself the possibility that James Stevenson in Glasgow, my first authentic ancestor, may have had a Highland *alias* upon his conscience and a claymore in his back parlour.

To one more tradition I may allude, that we are somehow descended from a French barber-surgeon who came to St. Andrews in the service of one of the Cardinal

Beatons. No details were added. But the very name of France was so detested in my family for three generations, that I am tempted to suppose there may be something in it.[1]

[1] Mr. J. H. Stevenson is satisfied that these speculations as to a possible Norse, Highland, or French origin are vain. All we know about the engineer family is that it was sprung from a stock of Westland Whigs settled in the latter part of the seventeenth century in the parish of Neilston, as mentioned at the beginning of the next chapter. It may be noted that the Ayrshire parish of Stevenson, the lands of which are said to have received the name in the twelfth century, lies within thirteen miles south-west of this place. The lands of Stevenson in Lanarkshire first mentioned in the next century, in the Ragman Roll, lie within twenty miles east.

CHAPTER I

DOMESTIC ANNALS

It is believed that in 1665, James Stevenson in Nether Carsewell, parish of Neilston, county of Renfrew, and presumably a tenant farmer, married one Jean Keir; and in 1675, without doubt, there was born to these two a son Robert, possibly a maltster in Glasgow. In 1710, Robert married, for a second time, Elizabeth Cumming, and there was born to them, in 1720, another Robert, certainly a maltster in Glasgow. In 1742, Robert the second married Margaret Fulton (Margret, she called herself), by whom he had ten children, among whom were Hugh, born February 1749, and Alan, born June 1752.

With these two brothers my story begins. Their deaths were simultaneous; their lives unusually brief and full. Tradition whispered me in childhood they were the owners of an islet near St. Kitts; and it is certain they had risen to be at the head of considerable interests in the West Indies, which Hugh managed abroad and Alan at home, at an age when others are still curveting a clerk's stool. My kinsman, Mr. Stevenson of Stirling, has heard his father mention that there had been "something romantic" about Alan's marriage: and, alas! he has forgotten what. It was early at least. His wife was Jean, daughter of David Lillie, a builder in Glasgow, and several times "Deacon of the Wrights": the date of the marriage has not reached me: but on 8th June 1772, when Robert, the only child of the union, was born, the husband and father had scarce passed, or had not yet attained, his twentieth year. Here was a youth making haste to give

hostages to fortune. But this early scene of prosperity in love and business was on the point of closing.

There hung in the house of this young family, and successively in those of my grandfather and father, an oil painting of a ship of many tons burthen. Doubtless the brothers had an interest in the vessel; I was told she had belonged to them outright; and the picture was preserved through years of hardship, and remains to this day in the possession of the family, the only memorial of my great-grandsire Alan. It was on this ship that he sailed on his last adventure, summoned to the West Indies by Hugh. An agent had proved unfaithful on a serious scale; and it used to be told me in my childhood how the brothers pursued him from one island to another in an open boat, were exposed to the pernicious dews of the tropics, and simultaneously struck down. The dates and places of their deaths (now before me) would seem to indicate a more scattered and prolonged pursuit: Hugh, on the 16th April 1774, in Tobago, within sight of Trinidad; Alan, so late as May 26th, and so far away as "Santt Kittes," in the Leeward Islands—both, says the family Bible, "of a fiver" (!). The death of Hugh was probably announced by Alan in a letter, to which we may refer the details of the open boat and the dew. Thus, at least, in something like the course of post, both were called away, the one twenty-five, the other twenty-two; their brief generation became extinct, their short-lived house fell with them; and "in these lawless parts and lawless times"—the words are my grandfather's—their property was stolen or became involved. Many years later, I understand some small recovery to have been made; but at the moment almost the whole means of the family seem to have perished with the young merchants. On the 27th April, eleven days after Hugh Stevenson, twenty-nine before Alan, died David Lillie, the Deacon of the Wrights; so that mother and son were orphaned in one month. Thus, from a few scraps of paper bearing little beyond dates, we construct the

outlines of the tragedy that shadowed the cradle of Robert Stevenson.

Jean Lillie was a young woman of strong sense, well fitted to contend with poverty, and of a pious disposition, which it is like that these misfortunes heated. Like so many other widowed Scotswomen, she vowed her son should wag his head in a pulpit; but her means were inadequate to her ambition. A charity school, and some time under a Mr. M'Intyre, "a famous linguist," were all she could afford in the way of education to the would-be minister. He learned no Greek; in one place he mentions that the Orations of Cicero were his highest book in Latin; in another that he had "delighted" in Virgil and Horace; but his delight could never have been scholarly. This appears to have been the whole of his training previous to an event which changed his own destiny and moulded that of his descendants—the second marriage of his mother.

There was a Merchant-Burgess of Edinburgh of the name of Thomas Smith. The Smith pedigree has been traced a little more particularly than the Stevensons', with a similar dearth of illustrious names. One character seems to have appeared, indeed, for a moment at the wings of history: a skipper of Dundee who smuggled over some Jacobite big-wig at the time of the 'Fifteen, and was afterwards drowned in Dundee harbour while going on board his ship. With this exception, the generations of the Smiths present no conceivable interest even to a descendant; and Thomas, of Edinburgh, was the first to issue from respectable obscurity. His father, a skipper out of Broughty Ferry, was drowned at sea while Thomas was still young. He seems to have owned a ship or two—whalers, I suppose, or coasters—and to have been a member of the Dundee Trinity House, whatever that implies. On his death the widow remained in Broughty, and the son came to push his future in Edinburgh. There is a story told of him in the family which I repeat here

because I shall have to tell later on a similar, but more perfectly authenticated, experience of his stepson, Robert Stevenson. Word reached Thomas that his mother was unwell, and he prepared to leave for Broughty on the morrow. It was between two and three in the morning, and the early northern daylight was already clear, when he awoke and beheld the curtains at the bed-foot drawn aside and his mother appear in the interval, smile upon him for a moment, and then vanish. The sequel is stereotype; he took the time by his watch, and arrived at Broughty to learn it was the very moment of her death. The incident is at least curious in having happened to such a person—as the tale is being told of him. In all else, he appears as a man, ardent, passionate, practical, designed for affairs and prospering in them far beyond the average. He founded a solid business in lamps and oils, and was the sole proprietor of a concern called the Greenside Company's Works—"a multifarious concern it was," writes my cousin, Professor Swan, "of tinsmiths, coppersmiths, brassfounders, blacksmiths, and japanners." He was also, it seems, a shipowner and underwriter. He built himself "a land"—Nos. 1 and 2 Baxter's Place, then no such unfashionable neighbourhood—and died, leaving his only son in easy circumstances, and giving to his three surviving daughters portions of five thousand pounds and upwards. There is no standard of success in life; but in one of its meanings, this is to succeed.

In what we know of his opinions, he makes a figure highly characteristic of the time. A high Tory and patriot, a captain—so I find it in my notes—of Edinburgh Spearmen, and on duty in the Castle during the Muir and Palmer troubles, he bequeathed to his descendants a bloodless sword and a somewhat violent tradition, both long preserved. The judge who sat on Muir and Palmer, the famous Braxfield, let fall from the bench the *obiter dictum* —"I never liked the French all my days, but now I hate them." If Thomas Smith, the Edinburgh Spearman, were

in court, he must have been tempted to applaud. The people of that land were his abhorrence; he loathed Buonaparte like Antichrist. Towards the end he fell into a kind of dotage; his family must entertain him with games of tin soldiers, which he took a childish pleasure to array and overset; but those who played with him must be upon their guard, for if his side, which was always that of the English against the French, should chance to be defeated, there would be trouble in Baxter's Place. For these opinions he may almost be said to have suffered. Baptised and brought up in the Church of Scotland, he had, upon some conscientious scruple, joined the communion of the Baptists. Like other Nonconformists, these were inclined to the Liberal side in politics, and, at least in the beginning, regarded Buonaparte as a deliverer. From the time of his joining the Spearmen, Thomas Smith became in consequence a bugbear to his brethren in the faith. "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword," they told him; they gave him "no rest"; "his position became intolerable"; it was plain he must choose between his political and his religious tenets; and in the last years of his life, about 1812, he returned to the Church of his fathers.

August 1786 was the date of his chief advancement, when, having designed a system of oil lights to take the place of the primitive coal fires before in use, he was dubbed engineer to the newly-formed Board of Northern Lighthouses. Not only were his fortunes bettered by the appointment, but he was introduced to a new and wider field for the exercise of his abilities, and a new way of life highly agreeable to his active constitution. He seems to have rejoiced in the long journeys, and to have combined them with the practice of field sports. "A tall, stout man coming ashore with his gun over his arm"—so he was described to my father—the only description that has come down to me—by a light-keeper old in the service. Nor did this change come alone. On the 9th July of the same year,

Thomas Smith had been left for the second time a widower. As he was still but thirty-three years old, prospering in his affairs, newly advanced in the world, and encumbered at the time with a family of children, five in number, it was natural that he should entertain the notion of another wife. Expeditious in business, he was no less so in his choice; and it was not later than June 1787—for my grandfather is described as still in his fifteenth year—that he married the widow of Alan Stevenson.

The perilous experiment of bringing together two families for once succeeded. Mr. Smith's two eldest daughters, Jean and Janet, fervent in piety, unwearied in kind deeds, were well qualified both to appreciate and to attract the stepmother; and her son, on the other hand, seems to have found immediate favour in the eyes of Mr. Smith. It is, perhaps, easy to exaggerate the ready-made resemblances; the tired woman must have done much to fashion girls who were under ten; the man, lusty and opinionated, must have stamped a strong impression on the boy of fifteen. But the cleavage of the family was too marked, the identity of character and interest produced between the two men on the one hand, and the three women on the other, was too complete to have been the result of influence alone. Particular bonds of union must have pre-existed on each side. And there is no doubt that the man and the boy met with common ambitions, and a common bent, to the practice of that which had not so long before acquired the name of civil engineering.

For the profession which is now so thronged, famous, and influential, was then a thing of yesterday. My grandfather had an anecdote of Smeaton, probably learned from John Clerk of Eldin, their common friend. Smeaton was asked by the Duke of Argyll to visit the West Highland coast for a professional purpose. He refused, appalled, it seems, by the rough travelling. "You can recommend some other fit person?" asked the Duke. "No," said

Smeaton, " I'm sorry I can't." " What ! " cried the Duke, " a profession with only one man in it ! Pray, who taught you ? " " Why," said Smeaton, " I believe I may say I was self-taught, an't please your grace." Smeaton, at the date of Thomas Smith's third marriage, was yet living ; and as the one had grown to the new profession from his place at the instrument-maker's, the other was beginning to enter it by the way of his trade. The engineer of to-day is confronted with a library of acquired results ; tables and formulæ to the value of folios full have been calculated and recorded ; and the student finds everywhere in front of him the footprints of the pioneers. In the eighteenth century the field was largely unexplored ; the engineer must read with his own eyes the face of nature ; he arose a volunteer, from the workshop or the mill, to undertake works which were at once inventions and adventures. It was not a science then—it was a living art ; and it visibly grew under the eyes and between the hands of its practitioners.

The charm of such an occupation was strongly felt by stepfather and stepson. It chanced that Thomas Smith was a reformer ; the superiority of his proposed lamp and reflectors over open fires of coal secured his appointment ; and no sooner had he set his hand to the task than the interest of that employment mastered him. The vacant stage on which he was to act, and where all had yet to be created—the greatness of the difficulties, the smallness of the means intrusted him—would rouse a man of his disposition like a call to battle. The lad introduced by marriage under his roof was of a character to sympathise ; the public usefulness of the service would appeal to his judgment, the perpetual need for fresh expedients stimulate his ingenuity. And there was another attraction which, in the younger man at least, appealed to, and perhaps first aroused a profound and enduring sentiment of romance : I mean the attraction of the life. The seas into which his labours carried the new engineer were still

scarce charted, the coasts still dark ; his way on shore was often far beyond the convenience of any road ; the isles in which he must sojourn were still partly savage. He must toss much in boats ; he must often adventure on horseback by the dubious bridle-track through unfrequented wildernesses ; he must sometimes plant his lighthouse in the very camp of wreckers ; and he was continually enforced to the vicissitudes of outdoor life. The joy of my grandfather in this career was strong as the love of woman. It lasted him through youth and manhood, it burned strong in age, and at the approach of death his last yearning was to renew these loved experiences. What he felt himself he continued to attribute to all around him. And to this supposed sentiment in others I find him continually, almost pathetically, appealing : often in vain.

Snared by these interests, the boy seems to have become almost at once the eager confidant and adviser of his new connection ; the Church, if he had ever entertained the prospect very warmly, faded from his view ; and at the age of nineteen I find him already in a post of some authority, superintending the construction of the lighthouse on the isle of Little Cumbrae, in the Firth of Clyde. The change of aim seems to have caused or been accompanied by a change of character. It sounds absurd to couple the name of my grandfather with the word indolence ; but the lad who had been destined from the cradle to the Church, and who had attained the age of fifteen without acquiring more than a moderate knowledge of Latin, was at least no unusual student. And from the day of his charge at Little Cumbrae he steps before us what he remained until the end, a man of the most zealous industry, greedy of occupation, greedy of knowledge, a stern husband of time, a reader, a writer, unflagging in his task of self-improvement. Thenceforward his summers were spent directing works and ruling workmen, now in uninhabited, now in half-savage islands ; his winters were set apart, first at the Andersonian Institution,

then at the University of Edinburgh to improve himself in mathematics, chemistry, natural history, agriculture, moral philosophy, and logic ; a bearded student—although no doubt scrupulously shaved. I find one reference to his years in class which will have a meaning for all who have studied in Scottish Universities. He mentions a recommendation made by the professor of logic. " The high-school men," he writes, " and *bearded men like myself*, were all attention." If my grandfather were throughout life a thought too studious of the art of getting on, much must be forgiven to the bearded and belated student who looked across, with a sense of difference, at " the high-school men." Here was a gulf to be crossed ; but already he could feel that he had made a beginning, and that must have been a proud hour when he devoted his earliest earnings to the repayment of the charitable foundation in which he had received the rudiments of knowledge.

In yet another way he followed the example of his father-in-law, and from 1794 to 1807, when the affairs of the Bell Rock made it necessary for him to resign, he served in different corps of volunteers. In the last of these he rose to a position of distinction, no less than captain of the Grenadier Company, and his colonel, in accepting his resignation, entreated he would do them " the favour of continuing as an honorary member of a corps which has been so much indebted for your zeal and exertions."

To very pious women the men of the house are apt to appear worldly. The wife, as she puts on her new bonnet before church, is apt to sigh over that assiduity which enabled her husband to pay the milliner's bill. And in the household of the Smiths and Stevensons the women were not only extremely pious, but the men were in reality a trifle worldly. Religious they both were ; conscious, like all Scots, of the fragility and unreality of that scene in which we play our uncomprehended parts ; like all Scots, realising daily and hourly the sense of

another will than ours and a perpetual direction in the affairs of life. But the current of their endeavours flowed in a more obvious channel. They had got on so far ; to get on further was their next ambition—to gather wealth, to rise in society, to leave their descendants higher than themselves, to be (in some sense) among the founders of families. Scott was in the same town nourishing similar dreams. But in the eyes of the women these dreams would be foolish and idolatrous.

I have before me some volumes of old letters addressed to Mrs. Smith and the two girls, her favourites, which depict in a strong light their characters and the society in which they moved.

" My very dear and much esteemed Friend," writes one correspondent, " this day being the anniversary of our acquaintance, I feel inclined to address you ; but where shall I find words to express the fealings of a graitful *Heart*, first to the Lord who graiciously inclined you on this day last year to notice an afflicted Strainger providentially cast in your way far from any Earthly friend ? . . . Methinks I shall hear him say unto you, ' Inasmuch as ye shewed kindness to my afflicted handmaiden, ye did it unto me.' "

This is to Jean ; but the same afflicted lady wrote indifferently to Jean, to Janet, and to Mrs. Smith, whom she calls " my Edinburgh mother." It is plain the three were as one person, moving to acts of kindness, like the Graces, inarmed. Too much stress must not be laid on the style of this correspondence ; Clarinda survived, not far away, and may have met the ladies on the Calton Hill ; and many of the writers appear, underneath the conventions of the period, to be genuinely moved. But what unpleasantly strikes a reader is that these devout unfortunates found a revenue in their devotion. It is everywhere the same tale : on the side of the soft-hearted ladies, substantial acts of help ; on the side of the correspondents, affection, italics, texts, ecstasies, and imperfect spelling. When a midwife is recommended, not at all for proficiency in her important art, but because she has " a sister whom

I [the correspondent] esteem and respect, and [who] is a spiritual daughter of my Hond Father in the Gosple," the mask seems to be torn off, and the wages of godliness appear too openly. Capacity is a secondary matter in a midwife, temper in a servant, affection in a daughter, and the repetition of a shibboleth fulfils the law. Common decency is at times forgot in the same page with the most sanctified advice and aspiration. Thus I am introduced to a correspondent who appears to have been at the time the housekeeper at Invermay, and who writes to condole with my grandmother in a season of distress. For nearly half a sheet she keeps to the point with an excellent discretion in language ; then suddenly breaks out :

" It was fully my intention to have left this at Martinmass, but the Lord fixes the bounds of our habitation. I have had more need of patience in my situation here than in any other, partly from the very violent, unsteady, deceitful temper of the Mistress of the Family, and also from the state of the house. It was in a train of repair when I came here two years ago, and is still in Confusion. There is above six Thousand Pounds' worth of Furniture come from London to be put up when the rooms are completely finished ; and then, woe be to the Person who is Housekeeper at Invermay ! "

And by the tail of the document, which is torn, I see she goes on to ask the bereaved family to seek her a new place. It is extraordinary that people should have been so deceived in so careless an impostor ; that a few sprinkled " God willings " should have blinded them to the essence of this venomous letter ; and that they should have been at the pains to bind it in with others (many of them highly touching) in their memorial of harrowing days. But the good ladies were without guile and without suspicion ; they were victims marked for the axe, and the religious impostors snuffed up the wind as they drew near.

I have referred above to my grandmother ; it was no slip of the pen : for by an extraordinary arrangement, in which it is hard not to suspect the managing hand of a mother, Jean Smith became the wife of Robert Stevenson. Mrs. Smith had failed in her design to make her son a

minister, and she saw him daily more immersed in business and worldly ambition. One thing remained that she might do: she might secure for him a godly wife, that great means of sanctification; and she had two under her hand, trained by herself, her dear friends and daughters both in law and love—Jean and Janet. Jean's complexion was extremely pale, Janet's was florid; my grandmother's nose was straight, my great-aunt's aquiline; but by the sound of the voice, not even a son was able to distinguish one from other. The marriage of a man of twenty-seven and a girl of twenty who have lived for twelve years as brother and sister, is difficult to conceive. It took place, however, and thus in 1799 the family was still further cemented by the union of a representative of the male or worldly element with one of the female and devout.

This essential difference remained unbridged, yet never diminished the strength of their relation. My grandfather pursued his design of advancing in the world with some measure of success; rose to distinction in his calling, grew to be the familiar of members of Parliament, judges of the Court of Session, and "landed gentlemen"; learned a ready address, had a flow of interesting conversation, and when he was referred to as "a highly respectable *bourgeois*," resented the description. My grandmother remained to the end devout and unambitious, occupied with her Bible, her children, and her house; easily shocked, and associating largely with a clique of godly parasites. I do not know if she called in the midwife already referred to; but the principle on which that lady was recommended, she accepted fully. The cook was a godly woman, the butcher a Christian man, and the table suffered. The scene has been often described to me of my grandfather sawing with darkened countenance at some indissoluble joint—"Preserve me, my dear, what kind of a reedy, stringy beast is this?"—of the joint removed, the pudding substituted and uncovered; and of my grandmother's anxious glance and hasty, deprecatory comment, "Just mismanaged!"

Yet with the invincible obstinacy of soft natures, she would adhere to the godly woman and the Christian man, or find others of the same kidney to replace them. One of her confidants had once a narrow escape; an unwieldy old woman, she had fallen from an outside stair in a close of the Old Town; and my grandmother rejoiced to communicate the providential circumstance that a baker had been passing underneath with his bread upon his head. "I would like to know what kind of providence the baker thought it!" cried my grandfather.

But the sally must have been unique. In all else that I have heard or read of him, so far from criticising, he was doing his utmost to honour and even to emulate his wife's pronounced opinions. In the only letter which has come to my hand of Thomas Smith's, I find him informing his wife that he was "in time for afternoon church"; similar assurances or cognate excuses abound in the correspondence of Robert Stevenson; and it is comical and pretty to see the two generations paying the same court to a female piety more highly strung: Thomas Smith to the mother of Robert Stevenson—Robert Stevenson to the daughter of Thomas Smith. And if for once my grandfather suffered himself to be hurried, by his sense of humour and justice, into that remark about the case of Providence and the Baker, I should be sorry for any of his children who should have stumbled into the same attitude of criticism. In the apocalyptic style of the housekeeper of Invermay, woe be to that person! But there was no fear; husband and sons all entertained for the pious, tender soul the same chivalrous and moved affection. I have spoken with one who remembered her, and who had been the intimate and equal of her sons, and I found this witness had been struck, as I had been, with a sense of disproportion between the warmth of the adoration felt and the nature of the woman, whether as described or observed. She diligently read and marked her Bible; she was a tender nurse; she had a sense of humour under strong control; she talked and found some amuse-

ment at her (or rather at her husband's) dinner-parties. It is conceivable that even my grandmother was amenable to the seductions of dress; at least I find her husband inquiring anxiously about "the gowns from Glasgow," and very careful to describe the toilet of the Princess Charlotte, whom he had seen in church "in a Pelisse and Bonnet of the same colour of cloth as the Boys' Dress jackets, trimmed with blue satin ribbons; the hat or Bonnet, Mr. Spittal said, was a Parisian slouch, and had a plume of three white feathers." But all this leaves a blank impression, and it is rather by reading backward in these old musty letters, which have moved me now to laughter and now to impatience, that I glean occasional glimpses of how she seemed to her contemporaries, and trace (at work in her queer world of godly and grateful parasites) a mobile and responsive nature. Fashion moulds us, and particularly women, deeper than we sometimes think; but a little while ago, and, in some circles, women stood or fell by the degree of their appreciation of old pictures; in the early years of the century (and surely with more reason) a character like that of my grandmother warmed, charmed, and subdued, like a strain of music, the hearts of the men of her own household. And there is little doubt that Mrs. Smith, as she looked on at the domestic life of her son and her stepdaughter, and numbered the heads in their increasing nursery, must have breathed fervent thanks to her Creator.

Yet this was to be a family unusually tried; it was not for nothing that one of the godly women saluted Miss Janet Smith as "a veteran in affliction"; and they were all before middle life experienced in that form of service. By the 1st of January 1808, besides a pair of still-born twins, five children had been born and still survived to the young couple. By the 11th two were gone; by the 28th a third had followed, and the two others were still in danger. In the letters of a former nurserymaid—I give her name, Jean Mitchell, *honoris causa*—we are enabled to feel, even at this

distance of time, some of the bitterness of that month of bereavement.

"I have this day received," she writes to Miss Janet, "the melancholy news of my dear babys' deaths. My heart is like to break for my dear Mrs. Stevenson. O may she be supported on this trying occasion! I hope her other three babys will be spared to her. O, Miss Smith, did I think when I parted from my sweet babys that I never was to see them more?" "I received," she begins her next, "the mournful news of my dear Jessie's death. I also received the hair of my three sweet babys, which I will preserve as dear to their memorys and as a token of Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson's friendship and esteem. At my leisure hours, when the children are in bed, they occupy all my thoughts, I dream of them. About two weeks ago, I dreamed that my sweet little Jessie came running to me in her usual way, and I took her in my arms. O my dear babys, were mortal eyes permitted to see them in heaven, we would not repine nor grieve for their loss."

By the 29th of February, the Reverend John Campbell, a man of obvious sense and human value, but hateful to the present biographer, because he wrote so many letters and conveyed so little information, summed up this first period of affliction in a letter to Miss Smith: "Your dear sister but a little while ago had a full nursery, and the dear blooming creatures sitting around her table filled her breast with hope that one day they should fill active stations in society and become an ornament in the Church below. But ah!"

Near a hundred years ago these little creatures ceased to be, and for not much less a period the tears have been dried. And to this day, looking in these stitched sheaves of letters, we hear the sound of many soft-hearted women sobbing for the lost. Never was such a massacre of the innocents; teething and chincough and scarlet fever and small-pox ran the round; and little Lillies, and Smiths, and Stevensons fell like moths about a candle; and nearly all the sympathetic correspondents deplore and recall the little losses of their own. "It is impossible to describe the Heavnly looks of the Dear Babe the three last days of his life," writes Mrs. Laurie to Mrs. Smith. "Never—never, my dear aunt, could I wish to eface the rememberance of this Dear Child. Never, never, my dear aunt!" And so

soon the memory of the dead and the dust of the survivors are buried in one grave.

There was another death in 1812; it passes almost unremarked; a single funeral seemed but a small event to these "veterans in affliction"; and by 1816 the nursery was full again. Seven little hopefuls enlivened the house; some were growing up; to the elder girl my grandfather already wrote notes in current hand at the tail of his letters to his wife: and to the elder boys he had begun to print, with laborious care, sheets of childish gossip and pedantic applications. Here, for instance, under date of May 26th, 1816, is part of a mythological account of London, with a moral for the three gentlemen, "Messieurs Alan, Robert, and James Stevenson," to whom the document is addressed:

"There are many prisons here like Bridewell, for, like other large towns, there are many bad men here as well as many good men. The natives of London are in general not so tall and strong as the people of Edinburgh, because they have not so much pure air, and instead of taking porridge they eat cakes made with sugar and plums. Here you have thousands of carts to draw timber, thousands of coaches to take you to all parts of the town, and thousands of boats to sail on the river Thames. But you must have money to pay, otherwise you can get nothing. Now the way to get money is, become clever men and men of education, by being good scholars."

From the same absence, he writes to his wife on a Sunday:

"It is now about eight o'clock with me, and I imagine you to be busy with the young folks, hearing the questions [*Anglicé*, catechism], and indulging the boys with a chapter from the large Bible, with their interrogations and your answers in the soundest doctrine. I hope James is getting his verse as usual, and that Mary is not forgetting her little *hymn*. While Jeannie will be reading Wotherspoon, or some other suitable and instructive book, I presume our friend, Aunt Mary, will have just arrived with the news of a *throng kirk* [a crowded church] and a great sermon. You may mention, with my compliments to my mother, that I was at St. Paul's to-day, and attended a very excellent service with Mr. James Lawrie. The text was 'Examine and see that ye be in the faith.'"

A twinkle of humour lights up this evocation of the dis-

tant scene—the humour of happy men and happy homes. Yet it is penned upon the threshold of fresh sorrow. James and Mary—he of the verse and she of the hymn—did not much more than survive to welcome their returning father. On the 25th, one of the godly women writes to Janet:

"My dearest beloved madam, when I last parted from you, you was so affected with your affliction [you? or I?] could think of nothing else. But on Saturday, when I went to inquire after your health, how was I startled to hear that dear James was gone! Ah, what is this? My dear benefactors, doing so much good to many, to the Lord, suddenly to be deprived of their most valued comforts! I was thrown into great perplexity, could do nothing but murmur, why these things were done to such a family. I could not rest, but at midnight, whether spoken [or not] it was presented to my mind—'Those whom ye deplore are walking with me in white.' I conclude from this the Lord saying to sweet Mrs. Stevenson: 'I gave them to be brought up for me: well done, good and faithful! they are fully prepared, and now I must present them to my father and your father, to my God and your God.'"

It would be hard to lay on flattery with a more sure and daring hand. I quote it as a model of a letter of condolence; be sure it would console. Very different, perhaps quite as welcome, is this from a lighthouse inspector to my grandfather:

"In reading your letter the trickling tear ran down my cheeks in silent sorrow for your departed dear ones, my sweet little friends. Well do I remember, and you will call to mind, their little innocent and interesting stories. Often have they come round me and taken me by the hand, but alas! I am no more destined to behold them."

The child who is taken becomes canonised, and the looks of the homeliest babe seem in the retrospect "heavenly the three last days of his life." But it appears that James and Mary had indeed been children more than usually engaging; a record was preserved a long while in the family of their remarks and "little innocent and interesting stories," and the blow and the blank were the more sensible.

Early the next month Robert Stevenson must proceed upon his voyage of inspection, part by land, part by sea. He left his wife plunged in low spirits; the thought of his

loss, and still more of her concern, was continually present in his mind, and he draws in his letters home an interesting picture of his family relations :—

"*Windygates Inn, Monday* (*Postmark July* 16*th*).

"My dearest Jeannie,—While the people of the inn are getting me a little bit of something to eat, I sit down to tell you that I had a most excellent passage across the water, and got to Wemyss at mid-day. I hope the children will be very good, and that Robert will take a course with you to learn his Latin lessons daily ; he may, however, read English in company. Let them have strawberries on Saturdays."

"*Westhaven,* 17*th July.*

" I have been occupied to-day at the harbour of Newport, opposite Dundee, and am this far on my way to Arbroath. You may tell the boys that I slept last night in Mr. Steadman's tent. I found my bed rather hard, but the lodgings were otherwise extremely comfortable. The encampment is on the Fife side of the Tay, immediately opposite to Dundee. From the door of the tent you command the most beautiful view of the Firth, both up and down, to a great extent. At night all was serene and still, the sky presented the most beautiful appearance of bright stars, and the morning was ushered in with the song of many little birds."

"*Aberdeen, July* 19*th.*

" I hope, my dear, that you are going out of doors regularly and taking much exercise. I would have you to *make the markets daily*—and by all means to take a seat in the coach once or twice in the week and see what is going on in town. [The family were at the sea-side.] It will be good not to be too great a stranger to the house. It will be rather painful at first, but as it is to be done, I would have you not to be too strange to the house in town.

" Tell the boys that I fell in with a soldier—his name is Henderson—who was twelve years with Lord Wellington and other commanders. He returned very lately with only eightpence-halfpenny in his pocket, and found his father and mother both in life, though they had never heard from him, nor he from them. He carried my great-coat and umbrella a few miles."

"*Fraserburgh, July* 20*th.*

" Fraserburgh is the same dull place which [Auntie] Mary and Jeannie found it. As I am travelling along the coast which they are acquainted with, you had better cause Robert bring down the map from Edinburgh : and it will be a good exercise in geography for the young folks to trace my course. I hope they have entered upon the writing. The library will afford abundance of excellent books, which I wish you would employ a little. I hope you are

doing me the favour to go much out with the boys, which will do you much good and prevent them from getting so very much overheated."

[*To the Boys—Printed.*]

"When I had last the pleasure of writing to you, your dear little brother James and your sweet little sister Mary were still with us. But it has pleased God to remove them to another and a better world, and we must submit to the will of Providence. I must, however, request of you to think sometimes upon them, and to be very careful not to do anything that will displease or vex your mother. It is therefore proper that you do not roamp [Scottish indeed] too much about, and that you learn your lessons.

"I went to Fraserburgh and visited Kinnaird Head Lighthouse, which I found in good order. All this time I travelled upon good roads, and paid many a toll-man by the way; but from Fraserburgh to Banff there is no toll-bars, and the road is so bad that I had to walk up and down many a hill, and for want of bridges the horses had to drag the chaise up to the middle of the wheels in water. At Banff I saw a large ship of 300 tons lying on the sands upon her beam-ends, and a wreck for want of a good harbour. Captain Wilson—to whom I beg my compliments—will show you a ship of 300 tons. At the towns of Macduff, Banff, and Portsoy, many of the houses are built of marble, and the rocks on this part of the coast or sea-side are marble. But, my dear Boys, unless marble be polished and dressed, it is a very coarse-looking stone, and has no more beauty than common rock. As a proof of this, ask the favour of your mother to take you to Thomson's Marble Works in South Leith, and you will see marble in all its stages, and perhaps you may there find Portsoy marble! The use I wish to make of this is to tell you that, without education, a man is just like a block of rough, unpolished marble. Notice, in proof of this, how much Mr. Neill and Mr. M'Gregor [the tutor] know, and observe how little a man knows who is not a good scholar. On my way to Fochabers I passed through many thousand acres of Fir timber, and saw many deer running in these woods."

[*To Mrs. Stevenson.*]

"*Inverness, July* 21*st.*

"I propose going to church in the afternoon, and as I have breakfasted late, I shall afterwards take a walk, and dine about six o'clock. I do not know who is the clergyman here, but I shall think of you all. I travelled in the mail-coach [from Banff] almost alone. While it was daylight I kept the top, and the passing along a country I had never before seen was a considerable amusement. But, my dear, you are all much in my thoughts, and many are the objects which recall the recollection of our tender and engaging children we have so recently lost. We must not, however, repine.

I could not for a moment wish any change of circumstances in their case; and in every comparative view of their state, I see the Lord's goodness in removing them from an evil world to an abode of bliss; and I must earnestly hope that you may be enabled to take such a view of this affliction as to live in the happy prospect of our all meeting again to part no more—and that under such considerations you are getting up your spirits. I wish you would walk about, and by all means go to town, and do not sit much at home."

"*Inverness, July* 23*rd.*

"I am duly favoured with your much-valued letter, and I am happy to find that you are so much with my mother, because that sort of variety has a tendency to occupy the mind, and to keep it from brooding too much upon one subject. Sensibility and tenderness are certainly two of the most interesting and pleasing qualities of the mind. These qualities are also none of the least of the many endearingments of the female character. But if that kind of sympathy and pleasing melancholy, which is familiar to us under distress, be much indulged, it becomes habitual, and takes such a hold of the mind as to absorb all the other affections, and unfit us for the duties and proper enjoyments of life. Resignation sinks into a kind of peevish discontent. I am far, however, from thinking there is the least danger of this in your case, my dear; for you have been on all occasions enabled to look upon the fortunes of this life as under the direction of a higher power, and have always preserved that propriety and consistency of conduct in all circumstances which endears your example to your family in particular, and to your friends. I am therefore, my dear, for you to go out much, and to go to the house up-stairs [he means to go up-stairs in the house, to visit the place of the dead children], and to put yourself in the way of the visits of your friends. I wish you would call on the Miss Grays, and it would be a good thing upon a Saturday to dine with my mother, and take Meggy and all the family with you, and let them have their strawberries in town. The tickets of one of the *old-fashioned coaches* would take you all up, and if the evening were good, they could all walk down, excepting Meggy and little David."

"*Inverness, July* 25*th,* 11 *p.m.*

"Captain Wemyss, of Wemyss, has come to Inverness to go the voyage with me, and as we are sleeping in a double-bedded room, I must no longer transgress. You must remember me the best way you can to the children."

"*On board of the Lighthouse Yacht, July* 29*th.*

"I got to Cromarty yesterday about mid-day, and went to church. It happened to be the sacrament there, and I heard a Mr. Smith at that place conclude the service with a very suitable exhortation. There seemed a great concourse of people, but they

had rather an unfortunate day for them at the tent, as it rained a good deal. After drinking tea at the inn, Captain Wemyss accompanied me on board, and we sailed about eight last night. The wind at present being rather a beating one, I think I shall have an opportunity of standing into the bay of Wick, and leaving this letter to let you know my progress and that I am well."

"Lighthouse Yacht, Stornoway, August 4th.

" To-day we had prayers on deck as usual when at sea. I read the 14th chapter, I think, of Job. Captain Wemyss has been in the habit of doing this on board his own ship, agreeably to the Articles of War. Our passage round the Cape [Cape Wrath] was rather a cross one, and as the wind was northerly, we had a pretty heavy sea, but upon the whole have made a good passage, leaving many vessels behind us in Orkney. I am quite well, my dear ; and Captain Wemyss, who has much spirit, and who is much given to observation, and a perfect enthusiast in his profession, enlivens the voyage greatly. Let me entreat you to move about much, and take a walk with the boys to Leith. I think they have still many places to see there, and I wish you would indulge them in this respect. Mr. Scales is the best person I know for showing them the sailcloth-weaving, etc., and he would have great pleasure in undertaking this. My dear, I trust soon to be with you, and that through the goodness of God we shall meet all well.

" There are two vessels lying here with emigrants for America, each with eighty people on board, at all ages, from a few days to upwards of sixty ! Their prospects must be very forlorn to go with a slender purse for distant and unknown countries."

"Lighthouse Yacht, off Greenock, Aug. 18th.

" It was after *church-time* before we got here, but we had prayers upon deck on the way up the Clyde. This has, upon the whole, been a very good voyage, and Captain Wemyss, who enjoys it much, has been an excellent companion ; we met with pleasure, and shall part with regret."

Strange that, after his long experience, my grandfather should have learned so little of the attitude and even the dialect of the spiritually-minded ; that after forty-four years in a most religious circle, he could drop without sense of incongruity from a period of accepted phrases to " trust his wife was *getting up her spirits,*" or think to reassure her as to the character of Captain Wemyss by mentioning that he had read prayers on the deck of his frigate *" agreeably to the Articles of War " !* Yet there is no doubt—and it is one of the most agreeable features of the kindly series—that

he was doing his best to please, and there is little doubt that he succeeded. Almost all my grandfather's private letters have been destroyed. This correspondence has not only been preserved entire, but stitched up in the same covers with the works of the godly women, the Reverend John Campbell, and the painful Mrs. Ogle. I did not think to mention the good dame, but she comes in usefully as an example. Amongst the treasures of the ladies of my family, her letters have been honoured with a volume to themselves. I read about a half of them myself; then handed over the task to one of stauncher resolution, with orders to communicate any fact that should be found to illuminate these pages. Not one was found; it was her only art to communicate by post second-rate sermons at second-hand; and such, I take it, was the correspondence in which my grandmother delighted. If I am right, that of Robert Stevenson, with his quaint smack of the contemporary "Sandford and Merton," his interest in the whole page of experience, his perpetual quest, and fine scent of all that seems romantic to a boy, his needless pomp of language, his excellent good sense, his unfeigned, unstained, unwearied human kindliness, would seem to her, in a comparison, dry and trivial and worldly. And if these letters were by an exception cherished and preserved, it would be for one or both of two reasons—because they dealt with and were bitter-sweet reminders of a time of sorrow; or because she was pleased, perhaps touched, by the writer's guileless efforts to seem spiritually-minded.

After this date there were two more births and two more deaths, so that the number of the family remained unchanged; in all five children survived to reach maturity and to outlive their parents.

CHAPTER II

THE SERVICE OF THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

I

It were hard to imagine a contrast more sharply defined than that between the lives of the men and women of this family: the one so chambered, so centred in the affections and the sensibilities; the other so active, healthy, and expeditious. From May to November, Thomas Smith and Robert Stevenson were on the mail, in the saddle, or at sea; and my grandfather, in particular, seems to have been possessed with a demon of activity in travel. In 1802, by direction of the Northern Lighthouse Board, he had visited the coast of England from St. Bees, in Cumberland, and round by the Scilly Islands to some place undecipherable by me; in all a distance of 2500 miles. In 1806 I find him starting "on a tour round the south coast of England, from the Humber to the Severn." Peace was not long declared ere he found means to visit Holland, where he was in time to see, in the navy-yard at Helvoetsluys, "about twenty of Bonaparte's *English flotilla* lying in a state of decay, the object of curiosity to Englishmen." By 1834 he seems to have been acquainted with the coast of France from Dieppe to Bordeaux; and a main part of his duty as Engineer to the Board of Northern Lights was one round of dangerous and laborious travel.

In 1786, when Thomas Smith first received the appointment, the extended and formidable coast of Scotland was lighted at a single point—the Isle of May, in the jaws of the Firth of Forth, where, on a tower already a hundred and

fifty years old, an open coal-fire blazed in an iron chauffer. The whole archipelago, thus nightly plunged in darkness, was shunned by sea-going vessels, and the favourite courses were north about Shetland and west about St. Kilda. When the Board met, four new lights formed the extent of their intentions—Kinnaird Head, in Aberdeenshire, at the eastern elbow of the coast ; North Ronaldsay, in Orkney, to keep the north and guide ships passing to the south'ard of Shetland ; Island Glass, on Harris, to mark the inner shore of the Hebrides and illuminate the navigation of the Minch ; and the Mull of Kintyre. These works were to be attempted against obstacles, material and financial, that might have staggered the most bold. Smith had no ship at his command till 1791 ; the roads in those outlandish quarters where his business lay were scarce passable when they existed, and the tower on the Mull of Kintyre stood eleven months unlighted while the apparatus toiled and foundered by the way among rocks and mosses. Not only had towers to be built and apparatus transplanted, the supply of oil must be maintained, and the men fed, in the same inaccessible and distant scenes ; a whole service, with its routine and hierarchy, had to be called out of nothing; and a new trade (that of lightkeeper) to be taught, recruited, and organised. The funds of the Board were at the first laughably inadequate. They embarked on their career on a loan of twelve hundred pounds, and their income in 1789, after relief by a fresh Act of Parliament, amounted to less than three hundred. It must be supposed that the thoughts of Thomas Smith, in these early years, were sometimes coloured with despair ; and since he built and lighted one tower after another, and created and bequeathed to his successors the elements of an excellent administration, it may be conceded that he was not after all an unfortunate choice for a first engineer.

War added fresh complications. In 1794 Smith came " very near to be taken " by a French squadron. In 1813 Robert Stevenson was cruising about the neighbourhood of

Cape Wrath in the immediate fear of Commodore Rogers. The men, and especially the sailors, of the lighthouse service must be protected by a medal and ticket from the brutal activity of the press-gang. And the zeal of volunteer patriots was at times embarrassing.

" I set off on foot," writes my grandfather, " for Marazion, a town at the head of Mount's Bay, where I was in hopes of getting a boat to freight. I had just got that length, and was making the necessary inquiry, when a young man, accompanied by several idle-looking fellows, came up to me, and in a hasty tone said, ' Sir, in the king's name I seize your person and papers.' To which I replied that I should be glad to see his authority, and know the reason of an address so abrupt. He told me the want of time prevented his taking regular steps, but that it would be necessary for me to return to Penzance, as I was suspected of being a French spy. I proposed to submit my papers to the nearest Justice of Peace, who was immediately applied to, and came to the inn where I was. He seemed to be greatly agitated, and quite at a loss how to proceed. The complaint preferred against me was ' that I had examined the Longships Lighthouse with the most minute attention, and was no less particular in my inquiries at the keepers of the lighthouse regarding the sunk rocks lying off the Land's End, with the sets of the currents and tides along the coast : that I seemed particularly to regret the situation of the rocks called the Seven Stones, and the loss of a beacon which the Trinity Board had caused to be fixed on the Wolf Rock ; that I had taken notes of the bearings of several sunk rocks, and a drawing of the lighthouse, and of Cape Cornwall. Further, that I had refused the honour of Lord Edgecombe's invitation to dinner, offering as an apology that I had some particular business on hand.' "

My grandfather produced in answer his credentials and letter of credit ; but the justice, after perusing them, " very gravely observed that they were ' musty bits of paper,' " and proposed to maintain the arrest. Some more enlightened magistrates at Penzance relieved him of suspicion and left him at liberty to pursue his journey,—" which I did with so much eagerness," he adds, " that I gave the two coal lights on the Lizard only a very transient look."

Lighthouse operations in Scotland differed essentially in character from those in England. The English coast is in comparison a habitable, homely place, well supplied with

towns; the Scottish presents hundreds of miles of savage islands and desolate moors. The Parliamentary committee of 1834, profoundly ignorant of this distinction, insisted with my grandfather that the work at the various stations should be let out on contract "in the neighbourhood," where sheep and deer, and gulls and cormorants, and a few ragged gillies, perhaps crouching in a bee-hive house, made up the only neighbours. In such situations repairs and improvements could only be overtaken by collecting (as my grandfather expressed it) a few "lads," placing them under charge of a foreman, and despatching them about the coast as occasion served. The particular danger of these seas increased the difficulty. The course of the lighthouse tender lies amid iron-bound coasts, among tide-races, the whirlpools of the Pentland Firth, flocks of islands, flocks of reefs, many of them uncharted. The aid of steam was not yet. At first in random coasting sloop, and afterwards in the cutter belonging to the service, the engineer must ply and run amongst these multiplied dangers, and sometimes late into the stormy autumn. For pages together my grandfather's diary preserves a record of these rude experiences; of hard winds and rough seas; and of "the try-sail and storm-jib, those old friends which I never like to see." They do not tempt to quotation, but it was the man's element, in which he lived, and delighted to live, and some specimen must be presented. On Friday, September 10th, 1830, the *Regent* lying in Lerwick Bay, we have this entry: "The gale increases, with continued rain." On the morrow, Saturday, 11th, the weather appeared to moderate, and they put to sea, only to be driven by evening into Levenswick. There they lay, "rolling much," with both anchors ahead and the square yard on deck, till the morning of Saturday, 18th. Saturday and Sunday they were plying to the southward with a "strong breeze and a heavy sea," and on Sunday evening anchored in Otterswick. "Monday, 20th, it blows so fresh that we have no communication with the shore.

We see Mr. Rome on the beach, but we cannot communicate with him. It blows 'mere fire,' as the sailors express it." And for three days more the diary goes on with tales of davits unshipped, high seas, strong gales from the southward, and the ship driven to refuge in Kirkwall or Deer Sound. I have many a passage before me to transcribe, in which my grandfather draws himself as a man of minute and anxious exactitude about details. It must not be forgotten that these voyages in the tender were the particular pleasure and reward of his existence; that he had in him a reserve of romance which carried him delightedly over these hardships and perils; that to him it was "great gain" to be eight nights and seven days in the savage bay of Levenswick—to read a book in the much agitated cabin—to go on deck and hear the gale scream in his ears, and see the landscape dark with rain, and the ship plunge at her two anchors—and to turn in at night and wake again at morning, in his narrow berth, to the clamorous and continued voices of the gale.

His perils and escapes were beyond counting. I shall only refer to two: the first, because of the impression made upon himself; the second, from the incidental picture it presents of the north islanders. On the 9th October 1794 he took passage from Orkney in the sloop *Elizabeth* of Stromness. She made a fair passage till within view of Kinnaird Head, where, as she was becalmed some three miles in the offing, and wind seemed to threaten from the south-east, the captain landed him, to continue his journey more expeditiously ashore. A gale immediately followed, and the *Elizabeth* was driven back to Orkney and lost with all hands. The second escape I have been in the habit of hearing related by an eye-witness, my own father, from the earliest days of childhood. On a September night, the *Regent* lay in the Pentland Firth in a fog and a violent and windless swell. It was still dark, when they were alarmed by the sound of breakers, and an anchor was immediately let go. The peep of dawn discovered them swinging in

desperate proximity to the Isle of Swona[1] and the surf bursting close under their stern. There was in this place a hamlet of the inhabitants, fisher-folk and wreckers ; their huts stood close about the head of the beach. All slept ; the doors were closed, and there was no smoke, and the anxious watchers on board ship seemed to contemplate a village of the dead. It was thought possible to launch a boat and tow the *Regent* from her place of danger ; and with this view a signal of distress was made and a gun fired with a red-hot poker from the galley. Its detonation awoke the sleepers. Door after door was opened, and in the grey light of the morning fisher after fisher was seen to come forth, yawning and stretching himself, nightcap on head. Fisher after fisher, I wrote, and my pen tripped ; for it should rather stand wrecker after wrecker. There was no emotion, no animation, it scarce seemed any interest ; not a hand was raised ; but all callously awaited the harvest of the sea, and their children stood by their side and waited also. To the end of his life, my father remembered that amphitheatre of placid spectators on the beach, and with a special and natural animosity, the boys of his own age. But presently a light air sprang up, and filled the sails, and fainted, and filled them again ; and little by little the *Regent* fetched way against the swell, and clawed off shore into the turbulent firth.

The purpose of these voyages was to effect a landing on open beaches or among shelving rocks, not for persons only, but for coals and food, and the fragile furniture of light-rooms. It was often impossible. In 1831 I find my grandfather "hovering for a week" about the Pentland Skerries for a chance to land ; and it was almost always difficult. Much knack and enterprise were early developed among the seamen of the service ; their management of boats is to this day a matter of admiration ; and I find my

[1] This is only a probable hypothesis ; I have tried to identify my father's anecdote in my grandfather's diary, and may very well have been deceived.—[R. L. S.]

grandfather in his diary depicting the nature of their excellence in one happily descriptive phrase, when he remarks that Captain Soutar had landed " the small stores and nine casks of oil *with all the activity of a smuggler.*" And it was one thing to land, another to get on board again. I have here a passage from the diary, where it seems to have been touch-and-go. " I landed at Tarbetness, on the eastern side of the point, in *a mere gale or blast of wind* from west-south-west, at 2 p.m. It blew so fresh that the captain, in a kind of despair, went off to the ship, leaving myself and the steward ashore. While I was in the lightroom, I felt it shaking and waving, not with the tremor of the Bell Rock, but with the *waving of a tree!* This the light-keepers seemed to be quite familiar to, the principal keeper remarking that 'it was very pleasant,' perhaps meaning interesting or curious. The captain worked the vessel into smooth water with admirable dexterity, and I got on board again about 6 p.m. from the other side of the point." But not even the dexterity of Soutar could prevail always; and my grandfather must at times have been left in strange berths and with but rude provision. I may instance the case of my father, who was storm-bound three days upon an islet, sleeping in the uncemented and unchimneyed houses of the islanders, and subsisting on a diet of nettle-soup and lobsters.

The name of Soutar has twice escaped my pen, and I feel I owe him a vignette. Soutar first attracted notice as mate of a praam at the Bell Rock, and rose gradually to be captain of the *Regent.* He was active, admirably skilled in his trade, and a man incapable of fear. Once, in London, he fell among a gang of confidence-men, naturally deceived by his rusticity and his prodigious accent. They plied him with drink—a hopeless enterprise, for Soutar could not be made drunk; they proposed cards, and Soutar would not play. At last, one of them, regarding him with a formidable countenance, inquired if he were not frightened? " I'm no' very easy fleyed," replied the captain. And the rooks

withdrew after some easier pigeon. So many perils shared, and the partial familiarity of so many voyages, had given this man a strong hold in my grandfather's estimation ; and there is no doubt but he had the art to court and please him with much hypocritical skill. He usually dined on Sundays in the cabin. He used to come down daily after dinner for a glass of port or whisky, often in his full rig of sou'-wester, oilskins, and long boots ; and I have often heard it described how insinuatingly he carried himself on these appearances, artfully combining the extreme of deference with a blunt and seamanlike demeanour. My father and uncles, with the devilish penetration of the boy, were far from being deceived ; and my father, indeed, was favoured with an object-lesson not to be mistaken. He had crept one rainy night into an apple-barrel on deck, and from this place of ambush overheard Soutar and a comrade conversing in their oilskins. The smooth sycophant of the cabin had wholly disappeared, and the boy listened with wonder to a vulgar and truculent ruffian. Of Soutar, I may say *tantum vidi*, having met him in the Leith docks now more than thirty years ago, when he abounded in the praises of my grandfather, encouraged me (in the most admirable manner) to pursue his footprints, and left impressed for ever on my memory the image of his own Bardolphian nose. He died not long after.

The engineer was not only exposed to the hazards of the sea ; he must often ford his way by land to remote and scarce accessible places, beyond reach of the mail or the post-chaise, beyond even the tracery of the bridle-path, and guided by natives across bog and heather. Up to 1807 my grandfather seems to have travelled much on horseback ; but he then gave up the idea—" such," he writes with characteristic emphasis and capital letters, " is the Plague of Baiting." He was a good pedestrian ; at the age of fifty-eight I find him covering seventeen miles over the moors of the Mackay country in less than seven hours, and that is not bad travelling for a scramble. The piece of

country traversed was already a familiar track, being that between Loch Eriboll and Cape Wrath ; and I think I can scarce do better than reproduce from the diary some traits of his first visit. The tender lay in Loch Eriboll ; by five in the morning they sat down to breakfast on board ; by six they were ashore—my grandfather, Mr. Slight an assistant, and Soutar of the jolly nose, and had been taken in charge by two young gentlemen of the neighbourhood and a pair of gillies. About noon they reached the Kyle of Durness and passed the ferry. By half-past three they were at Cape Wrath—not yet known by the emphatic abbreviation of "The Cape"—and beheld upon all sides of them unfrequented shores, an expanse of desert moor, and the high-piled Western Ocean. The site of the tower was chosen. Perhaps it is by inheritance of blood, but I know few things more inspiriting than this location of a lighthouse in a designated space of heather and air, through which the sea-birds are still flying. By 9 p.m. the return journey had brought them again to the shores of the Kyle. The night was dirty, and as the sea was high and the ferry-boat small, Soutar and Mr. Stevenson were left on the far side, while the rest of the party embarked and were received into the darkness. They made, in fact, a safe though an alarming passage ; but the ferryman refused to repeat the adventure ; and my grandfather and the captain long paced the beach, impatient for their turn to pass, and tormented with rising anxiety as to the fate of their companions. At length they sought the shelter of a shepherd's house. "We had miserable up-putting," the diary continues, "and on both sides of the ferry much anxiety of mind. Our beds were clean straw, and but for the circumstance of the boat, I should have slept as soundly as ever I did after a walk through moss and mire of sixteen hours."

To go round the lights, even to-day, is to visit past centuries. The tide of tourists that flows yearly in Scotland, vulgarising all where it approaches, is still defined by certain barriers. It will be long ere there is a hotel at Sum-

burgh or a hydropathic at Cape Wrath ; it will be long ere any *char-à-banc*, laden with tourists, shall drive up to Barra Head or Monach, the Island of the Monks. They are farther from London than St. Petersburg, and except for the towers, sounding and shining all night with fog-bells and the radiance of the light-room, glittering by day with the trivial brightness of white paint, these island and moorland stations seem inaccessible to the civilisation of to-day, and even to the end of my grandfather's career the isolation was far greater. There ran no post at all in the Long Island ; from the lighthouse on Barra Head a boat must be sent for letters as far as Tobermory, between sixty and seventy miles of open sea ; and the posts of Shetland, which had surprised Sir Walter Scott in 1814, were still unimproved in 1833, when my grandfather reported on the subject. The group contained at the time a population of 30,000 souls, and enjoyed a trade which had increased in twenty years sevenfold, to between three and four thousand tons. Yet the mails were despatched and received by chance coasting vessels at the rate of a penny a letter ; six and eight weeks often elapsed between opportunities, and when a mail was to be made up, sometimes at a moment's notice, the bellman was sent hastily through the streets of Lerwick. Between Shetland and Orkney, only seventy miles apart, there was "no trade communication whatever."

Such was the state of affairs, only sixty years ago, with the three largest clusters of the Scottish Archipelago ; and forty-seven years earlier, when Thomas Smith began his rounds, or forty-two, when Robert Stevenson became conjoined with him in these excursions, the barbarism was deep, the people sunk in superstition, the circumstances of their life perhaps unique in history. Lerwick and Kirkwall, like Guam or the Bay of Islands, were but barbarous ports where whalers called to take up and to return experienced seamen. On the outlying islands the clergy lived isolated, thinking other thoughts, dwelling in a different

country from their parishioners, like missionaries in the South Seas. My grandfather's unrivalled treasury of anecdote was never written down ; it embellished his talk while he yet was, and died with him when he died ; and such as have been preserved relate principally to the islands of Ronaldsay and Sanday, two of the Orkney group. These bordered on one of the water-highways of civilisation ; a great fleet passed annually in their view, and of the shipwrecks of the world they were the scene and cause of a proportion wholly incommensurable to their size. In one year, 1798, my grandfather found the remains of no fewer than five vessels on the isle of Sanday, which is scarcely twelve miles long.

" Hardly a year passed," he writes, " without instances of this kind ; for, owing to the projecting points of this strangely formed island, the lowness and whiteness of its eastern shores, and the wonderful manner in which the scanty patches of land are intersected with lakes and pools of water, it becomes, even in daylight, a deception, and has often been fatally mistaken for an open sea. It had even become proverbial with some of the inhabitants to observe that ' if wrecks were to happen, they might as well be sent to the poor isle of Sanday as anywhere else.' On this and the neighbouring islands the inhabitants had certainly had their share of wrecked goods, for the eye is presented with these melancholy remains in almost every form. For example, although quarries are to be met with generally in these islands, and the stones are very suitable for building dykes (*Anglicé*, walls), yet instances occur of the land being enclosed, even to a considerable extent, with shiptimbers. The author has actually seen a park (*Anglicé*, meadow) paled round chiefly with cedar-wood and mahogany from the wreck of a Honduras-built ship ; and in one island, after the wreck of a ship laden with wine, the inhabitants have been known to take claret to their barley-meal porridge. On complaining to one of the pilots of the badness of his boat's sails, he replied to the author with some degree of pleasantry, ' Had it been His will that you camena' here wi' your lights, we might a' had better sails to our boats, and more o' other things.' It may further be mentioned that when some of Lord Dundas's farms are to be let in these islands a competition takes place for the lease, and it is *bona fide* understood that a much higher rent is paid than the lands would otherwise give were it not for the chance of making considerably by the agency and advantages attending shipwrecks on the shores of the respective farms."

The people of North Ronaldsay still spoke Norse, or,

rather, mixed it with their English. The walls of their huts were built to a great thickness of rounded stones from the sea-beach; the roof flagged, loaded with earth, and perforated by a single hole for the escape of smoke. The grass grew beautifully green on the flat house-top, where the family would assemble with their dogs and cats, as on a pastoral lawn; there were no windows, and in my grandfather's expression, "there was really no demonstration of a house unless it were the diminutive door." He once landed on Ronaldsay with two friends. "The inhabitants crowded and pressed so much upon the strangers that the bailiff, or resident factor of the island, blew with his ox-horn, calling out to the natives to stand off and let the gentlemen come forward to the laird; upon which one of the islanders, as spokesman, called out, 'God ha'e us, man! thou needsna mak' sic a noise. It's no' every day we ha'e *three hatted men* on our isle.'" When the Surveyor of Taxes came (for the first time, perhaps) to Sanday, and began in the King's name to complain of the unconscionable swarms of dogs, and to menace the inhabitants with taxation, it chanced that my grandfather and his friend, Dr. Patrick Neill, were received by an old lady in a Ronaldsay hut. Her hut, which was similar to the model described, stood on a Ness, or point of land jutting into the sea. They were made welcome in the firelit cellar, placed "in *casey* or straw-worked chairs, after the Norwegian fashion, with arms, and a canopy overhead," and given milk in a wooden dish. These hospitalities attended to, the old lady turned at once to Dr. Neill, whom she took for the Surveyor of Taxes. "Sir," said she, "gin ye'll tell the King that I canna keep the Ness free o' the Bangers (sheep) without twa hun's, and twa guid hun's too, he'll pass me threa the tax on dugs."

This familiar confidence, these traits of engaging simplicity, are characters of a secluded people. Mankind—and, above all, islanders—come very swiftly to a bearing, and find very readily, upon one convention or another, a tolerable corporate life. The danger is to those from with-

out, who have not grown up from childhood in the islands, but appear suddenly in that narrow horizon, life-sized apparitions. For these no bond of humanity exists, no feeling of kinship is awakened by their peril; they will assist at a shipwreck, like the fisher-folk of Lunga, as spectators, and when the fatal scene is over, and the beach strewn with dead bodies, they will fence their fields with mahogany, and, after a decent grace, sup claret to their porridge. It is not wickedness: it is scarce evil; it is only, in its highest power, the sense of isolation and the wise disinterestedness of feeble and poor races. Think how many viking ships had sailed by these islands in the past, how many vikings had landed, and raised turmoil, and broken up the barrows of the dead, and carried off the wines of the living; and blame them, if you are able, for that belief (which may be called one of the parables of the devil's gospel) that a man rescued from the sea will prove the bane of his deliverer. It might be thought that my grandfather, coming there unknown, and upon an employment so hateful to the inhabitants, must have run the hazard of his life. But this were to misunderstand. He came franked by the laird and the clergyman; he was the King's officer; the work was "opened with prayer by the Rev. Walter Trail, minister of the parish"; God and the King had decided it, and the people of these pious islands bowed their heads. There landed, indeed, in North Ronaldsay, during the last decade of the eighteenth century, a traveller whose life seems really to have been imperilled. A very little man of a swarthy complexion, he came ashore, exhausted and unshaved, from a long boat passage, and lay down to sleep in the home of the parish schoolmaster. But he had been seen landing. The inhabitants had identified him for a Pict, as, by some singular confusion of name, they called the dark and dwarfish aboriginal people of the land. Immediately the obscure ferment of a race-hatred, grown into a superstition, began to work in their bosoms, and they crowded about the house and the room-door with fearful whisperings. For some

time the schoolmaster held them at bay, and at last despatched a messenger to call my grandfather. He came: he found the islanders beside themselves at this unwelcome resurrection of the dead and the detested; he was shown, as adminicular of testimony, the traveller's uncouth and thick-soled boots; he argued, and finding argument unavailing, consented to enter the room and examine with his own eyes the sleeping Pict. One glance was sufficient: the man was now a missionary, but he had been before that an Edinburgh shopkeeper with whom my grandfather had dealt. He came forth again with this report, and the folk of the island, wholly relieved, dispersed to their own houses. They were timid as sheep and ignorant as limpets; that was all. But the Lord deliver us from the tender mercies of a frightened flock!

I will give two more instances of their superstition. When Sir Walter Scott visited the Stones of Stennis, my grandfather put in his pocket a hundred-foot line, which he unfortunately lost.

"Some years afterwards," he writes, "one of my assistants on a visit to the Stones of Stennis took shelter from a storm in a cottage close by the lake; and seeing a box-measuring-line in the bole or sole of the cottage window, he asked the woman where she got this well-known professional appendage. She said: 'O sir, ane of the bairns fand it lang syne at the Stanes; and when drawing it out we took fright, and thinking it had belanged to the fairies, we threw it into the bole, and it has layen there ever since.'"

This is for the one; the last shall be a sketch by the master hand of Scott himself:—

"At the village of Stromness, on the Orkney main island, called Pomona, lived, in 1814, an aged dame called Bessie Millie, who helped out her subsistence by selling favourable winds to mariners. He was a venturous master of a vessel who left the roadstead of Stromness without paying his offering to propitiate Bessie Millie! Her fee was extremely moderate, being exactly sixpence, for which she boiled her kettle and gave the bark the advantage of her prayers, for she disclaimed all unlawful acts. The wind thus petitioned for was sure, she said, to arrive, though occasionally the mariners had to wait some time for it. The woman's dwelling and appearance were not unbecoming her pretensions. Her house, which was on

the brow of the steep hill on which Stromness is founded, was only accessible by a series of dirty and precipitous lanes, and for exposure might have been the abode of Eolus himself, in whose commodities the inhabitant dealt. She herself was, as she told us, nearly one hundred years old, withered and dried up like a mummy. A clay-coloured kerchief, folded round her neck, corresponded in colour to her corpse-like complexion. Two light blue eyes that gleamed with a lustre like that of insanity, an utterance of astonishing rapidity, a nose and chin that almost met together, and a ghastly expression of cunning, gave her the effect of Hecate. Such was Bessie Millie, to whom the mariners paid a sort of tribute with a feeling between jest and earnest."

II

From about the beginning of the century up to 1807 Robert Stevenson was in partnership with Thomas Smith. In the last-named year the partnership was dissolved; Thomas Smith returning to his business, and my grandfather becoming sole engineer to the Board of Northern Lights.

I must try, by excerpts from his diary and correspondence, to convey to the reader some idea of the ardency and thoroughness with which he threw himself into the largest and least of his multifarious engagements in this service. But first I must say a word or two upon the life of lightkeepers, and the temptations to which they are more particularly exposed. The lightkeeper occupies a position apart among men. In sea-towers the complement has always been three since the deplorable business in the Eddystone, when one keeper died, and the survivor, signalling in vain for relief, was compelled to live for days with the dead body. These usually pass their time by the pleasant human expedient of quarrelling; and sometimes, I am assured, not one of the three is on speaking terms with any other. On shore stations, which on the Scottish coast are sometimes hardly less isolated, the usual number is two, a principal and an assistant. The principal is dissatisfied with the assistant, or perhaps the assistant keeps pigeons, and the principal wants the water from the roof.

Their wives and families are with them, living cheek by jowl. The children quarrel; Jockie hits Jimsie in the eye, and the mothers make haste to mingle in the dissension. Perhaps there is trouble about a broken dish; perhaps Mrs. Assistant is more highly born than Mrs. Principal and gives herself airs; and the men are drawn in and the servants presently follow. "Church privileges have been denied the keeper's and the assistant's servants," I read in one case, and the eminently Scots periphrasis means neither more nor less than excommunication, "on account of the discordant and quarrelsome state of the families. The cause, when inquired into, proves to be *tittle-tattle* on both sides." The tender comes round; the foremen and artificers go from station to station; the gossip flies through the whole system of the service, and the stories, disfigured and exaggerated, return to their own birthplace with the returning tender. The English Board was apparently shocked by the picture of these dissensions. "When the Trinity House can," I find my grandfather writing at Beachy Head, in 1834, "they do not appoint two keepers, they disagree so ill. A man who has a family is assisted by his family; and in this way, to my experience and present observation, the business is very much neglected. One keeper is, in my view, a bad system. This day's visit to an English lighthouse convinces me of this, as the lightkeeper was walking on a staff with the gout, and the business performed by one of his daughters, a girl of thirteen or fourteen years of age." This man received a hundred a year! It shows a different reading of human nature, perhaps typical of Scotland and England, that I find in my grandfather's diary the following pregnant entry: "*The lightkeepers, agreeing ill, keep one another to their duty.*" But the Scottish system was not alone founded on this cynical opinion. The dignity and the comfort of the northern lightkeeper were both attended to. He had a uniform to "raise him in his own estimation, and in that of his neighbour, which is of consequence to a person of trust.

The keepers," my grandfather goes on, in another place, " are attended to in all the detail of accommodation in the best style as shipmasters ; and this is believed to have a sensible effect upon their conduct, and to regulate their general habits as members of society." He notes, with the same dip of ink, that " the brasses were not clean, and the persons of the keepers not *trig* " ; and thus we find him writing to a culprit : " I have to complain that you are not cleanly in your person, and that your manner of speech is ungentle, and rather inclines to rudeness. You must therefore take a different view of your duties as a light-keeper." A high ideal for the service appears in these expressions, and will be more amply illustrated further on. But even the Scottish lightkeeper was frail. During the unbroken solitude of the winter months, when inspection is scarce possible, it must seem a vain toil to polish the brass hand-rail of the stair, or to keep an unrewarded vigil in the lightroom ; and the keepers are habitually tempted to the beginnings of sloth, and must unremittingly resist. He who temporises with his conscience is already lost. I must tell here an anecdote that illustrates the difficulties of inspection. In the days of my uncle David and my father there was a station which they regarded with jealousy. The two engineers compared notes and were agreed. The tower was always clean, but seemed always to bear traces of a hasty cleansing, as though the keepers had been suddenly forewarned. On inquiry, it proved that such was the case, and that a wandering fiddler was the unfailing harbinger of the engineer. At last my father was storm-stayed one Sunday in a port at the other side of the island. The visit was quite overdue, and as he walked across upon the Monday morning he promised himself that he should at last take the keepers unprepared. They were both waiting for him in uniform at the gate ; the fiddler had been there on Saturday !

My grandfather, as will appear from the following extracts, was much a martinet, and had a habit of expressing

himself on paper with an almost startling emphasis. Personally, with his powerful voice, sanguine countenance, and eccentric and original locutions, he was well qualified to inspire a salutary terror in the service.

" I find that the keepers have, by some means or another, got into the way of cleaning too much with rotten-stone and oil. I take the principal keeper to *task* on this subject, and make him bring a clean towel and clean one of the brazen frames, which leaves the towel in an odious state. This towel I put up in a sheet of paper, seal, and take with me to confront Mr. Murdoch, who has just left the station." " This letter "—a stern enumeration of complaints—" to lie a week on the lightroom book-place, and to be put in the Inspector's hands when he comes round." " It is the most painful thing that can occur for me to have a correspondence of this kind with any of the keepers ; and when I come to the Lighthouse, instead of having the satisfaction to meet them with approbation, it is distressing when one is obliged to put on a most angry countenance and demeanour ; but from such culpable negligence as you have shown there is no avoiding it. I hold it as a fixed maxim that, when a man or a family put on a slovenly appearance in their houses, stairs, and lanterns, I always find their reflectors, burners, windows, and light in general, ill attended to ; and, therefore, I must insist on cleanliness thoughout." " I find you very deficient in the duty of the high tower. You thus place your appointment as Principal Keeper in jeopardy ; and I think it necessary, as an old servant of the Board, to put you upon your guard once for all at this time. I call upon you to recollect what was formerly and is now said to you. The state of the backs of the reflectors at the high tower was disgraceful, as I pointed out to you on the spot. They were as if spitten upon, and greasy finger-marks upon the back straps. I demand an explanation of this state of things." " The cause of the Commissioners dismissing you is expressed in the minute ; and it must be a matter of regret to you that you have been so much engaged in smuggling, and also that the Reports relative to the cleanliness of the Lighthouse, upon being referred to, rather added to their unfavourable opinion." " I do not go into the dwelling-house, but severely chide the lightkeepers for the disagreement that seems to subsist among them." " The families of the two lightkeepers here agree very ill. I have effected a reconciliation for the present." " Things are in a very *humdrum* state here. There is no painting, and in and out of doors no taste or tidiness displayed. Robert's wife *greets* and M'Gregor's scolds ; and Robert is so down-hearted that he says he is unfit for duty. I told him that if he was to mind wives' quarrels, and to take them up, the only way was for him and M'Gregor to go down to the point like Sir G. Grant and Lord Somerset." " I cannot say that I have experienced a more unpleasant meeting than that of the lighthouse folks this morning, or ever saw a stronger example of unfeeling barbarity than the conduct which the ——s exhibited. These two

cold-hearted persons, not contented with having driven the daughter of the poor nervous woman from her father's house, *both* kept *pouncing* at her, lest she should forget her great misfortune. Write me of their conduct. Do not make any communication of the state of these families at Kinnaird Head, as this would be like *Tale-bearing.*"

There is the great word out. Tales and Tale-bearing, always with the emphatic capitals, run continually in his correspondence. I will give but two instances :—

" Write to David [one of the lightkeepers] and caution him to be more prudent how he expresses himself. Let him attend his duty to the Lighthouse and his family concerns, and give less heed to Tale-bearers." " I have not your last letter at hand to quote its date ; but, if I recollect, it contains some kind of tales, which nonsense I wish you would lay aside, and notice only the concerns of your family and the important charge committed to you."

Apparently, however, my grandfather was not himself inaccessible to the Tale-bearer, as the following indicates :—

" In walking along with Mr. ——, I explain to him that I should be under the necessity of looking more closely into the business here from his conduct at Buddonness, which had given an instance of weakness in the Moral principle which had staggered my opinion of him. His answer was, ' That will be with regard to the lass ? ' I told him I was to enter no farther with him upon the subject." " Mr. Miller appears to be master and man. I am sorry about this foolish fellow. Had I known his train, I should not, as I did, have rather forced him into the service. Upon finding the windows in the state they were, I turned upon Mr. Watt, and especially upon Mr. Stewart. The latter did not appear for a length of time to have visited the lightroom. On asking the cause—did Mr. Watt and him (*sic*) disagree ; he said no ; but he had got very bad usage from the assistant, ' who was a very obstreperous man.' I could not bring Mr. Watt to put in language his objections to Miller ; all I could get was that, he being your friend, and saying he was unwell, he did not like to complain or to push the man ; that the man seemed to have no liking to anything like work ; that he was unruly ; that, being an educated man, he despised them. I was, however, determined to have out of these *unwilling* witnesses the language alluded to. I fixed upon Mr. Stewart as chief ; he hedged. My curiosity increased, and I urged. Then he said, ' What would I think, just exactly, of Mr. Watt being called an Old B—— ? ' You may judge of my surprise. There was not another word uttered. This was quite enough, as coming from a person I should have calculated upon quite different behaviour from. It spoke a volume of the man's mind and want of principle." " Object to the keeper keeping a

Bull-Terrier dog of ferocious appearance. It is dangerous, as we land at all times of the night." "Have only to complain of the storehouse floor being spotted with oil. Give orders for this being instantly rectified, so that on my return to-morrow I may see things in good order." "The furniture of both houses wants much rubbing. Mrs. ——'s carpets are absurd beyond anything I have seen. I want her to turn the fenders up with the bottom to the fireplace: the carpets, when not likely to be in use, folded up and laid as a hearthrug partly under the fender."

My grandfather was king in the service to his finger-tips. All should go in his way, from the principal light-keeper's coat to the assistant's fender, from the gravel in the garden-walks to the bad smell in the kitchen, or the oil-spots on the store-room floor. It might be thought there was nothing more calculated to awake men's resentment, and yet his rule was not more thorough than it was beneficent. His thought for the keepers was continual, and it did not end with their lives. He tried to manage their successions; he thought no pains too great to arrange between a widow and a son who had succeeded his father; he was often harassed and perplexed by tales of hardship; and I find him writing, almost in despair, of their improvident habits and the destitution that awaited their families upon a death. "The house being completely furnished, they come into possession without necessaries, and they go out NAKED. The insurance seems to have failed, and what next is to be tried?" While they lived he wrote behind their backs to arrange for the education of their children, or to get them other situations if they seemed unsuitable for the Northern Lights. When he was at a lighthouse on a Sunday he held prayers and heard the children read. When a keeper was sick, he lent him his horse and sent him mutton and brandy from the ship. "The assistant's wife having been this morning confined, there was sent ashore a bottle of sherry and a few rusks—a practice which I have always observed in this service," he writes. They dwelt, many of them, in uninhabited isles or desert forelands, totally cut off from shops. Many of them were, besides, fallen into a rustic dishabitude of life,

so that even when they visited a city they could scarce be trusted with their own affairs, as (for example) he who carried home to his children, thinking they were oranges, a bag of lemons. And my grandfather seems to have acted, at least in his early years, as a kind of gratuitous agent for the service. Thus I find him writing to a keeper in 1806, when his mind was already pre-occupied with arrangements for the Bell Rock: "I am much afraid I stand very unfavourably with you as a man of promise, as I was to send several things of which I believe I have more than once got the memorandum. All I can say is that in this respect you are not singular. This makes me no better; but really I have been driven about beyond all example in my past experience, and have been essentially obliged to neglect my own urgent affairs." No servant of the Northern Lights came to Edinburgh but he was entertained at Baxter's Place to breakfast. There, at his own table, my grandfather sat down delightedly with his broad-spoken, homespun officers. His whole relation to the service was, in fact, patriarchal; and I believe I may say that throughout its ranks he was adored. I have spoken with many who knew him; I was his grandson, and their words may have very well been words of flattery; but there was one thing that could not be affected, and that was the look and light that came into their faces at the name of Robert Stevenson.

In the early part of the century the foreman builder was a young man of the name of George Peebles, a native of Anstruther. My grandfather had placed in him a very high degree of confidence, and he was already designated to be foreman at the Bell Rock, when, on Christmas-day 1806, on his way home from Orkney, he was lost in the schooner *Traveller*. The tale of the loss of the *Traveller* is almost a replica of that of the *Elizabeth* of Stromness; like the *Elizabeth* she came as far as Kinnaird Head, was then surprised by a storm, driven back to Orkney, and bilged and sank on the island of Flotta. It seems it was about

the dusk of the day when the ship struck, and many of the crew and passengers were drowned. About the same hour, my grandfather was in his office at the writing-table ; and the room beginning to darken, he laid down his pen and fell asleep. In a dream he saw the door open and George Peebles come in, " reeling to and fro, and staggering like a drunken man," with water streaming from his head and body to the floor. There it gathered into a wave which, sweeping forward, submerged my grandfather. Well, no matter how deep ; versions vary ; and at last he awoke, and behold it was a dream ! But it may be conceived how profoundly the impression was written even on the mind of a man averse from such ideas, when the news came of the wreck on Flotta and the death of George.

George's vouchers and accounts had perished with himself ; and it appeared he was in debt to the Commissioners. But my grandfather wrote to Orkney twice, collected evidence of his disbursements, and proved him to be seventy pounds ahead. With this sum, he applied to George's brothers, and had it apportioned between their mother and themselves. He approached the Board and got an annuity of £5 bestowed on the widow Peebles ; and we find him writing her a long letter of explanation and advice, and pressing on her the duty of making a will. That he should thus act executor was no singular instance. But besides this we are able to assist at some of the stages of a rather touching experiment : no less than an attempt to secure Charles Peebles heir to George's favour. He is despatched, under the character of " a fine young man " ; recommended to gentlemen for " advice, as he's a stranger in your place, and indeed to this kind of charge, this being his first outset as Foreman " ; and for a long while after, the letter-book, in the midst of that thrilling first year of the Bell Rock, is encumbered with pages of instruction and encouragement. The nature of a bill, and the precautions that are to be observed about discounting it, are expounded at length and with clearness. " You are not, I hope,

neglecting, Charles, to work the harbour at spring-tides; and see that you pay the greatest attention to get the well so as to supply the keeper with water, for he is a very helpless fellow, and so unfond of hard work that I fear he could do ill to keep himself in water by going to the other side for it."—"With regard to spirits, Charles, I see very little occasion for it." These abrupt apostrophes sound to me like the voice of an awakened conscience; but they would seem to have reverberated in vain in the ears of Charles. There was trouble in Pladda, his scene of operations; his men ran away from him, there was at least a talk of calling in the Sheriff. "I fear," writes my grandfather, "you have been too indulgent, and I am sorry to add that men do not answer to be too well treated, a circumstance which I have experienced, and which you will learn as you go on in business." I wonder, was not Charles Peebles himself a case in point? Either death, at least, or disappointment and discharge, must have ended his service in the Northern Lights; and in later correspondence I look in vain for any mention of his name—Charles, I mean, not Peebles: for as late as 1839 my grandfather is patiently writing to another of the family: "I am sorry you took the trouble of applying to me about your son, as it lies quite out of my way to forward his views in the line of his profession as a Draper."

III

A professional life of Robert Stevenson has been already given to the world by his son David, and to that I would refer those interested in such matters. But my own design, which is to represent the man, would be very ill carried out if I suffered myself or my reader to forget that he was, first of all and last of all, an engineer. His chief claim to the style of a mechanical inventor is on account of the Jib or Balance Crane of the Bell Rock, which are beautiful con-

trivances. But the great merit of this engineer was not in the field of engines. He was above all things a projector of works in the face of nature, and a modifier of nature itself. A road to be made, a tower to be built, a harbour to be constructed, a river to be trained and guided in its channel—these were the problems with which his mind was continually occupied ; and for these and similar ends he travelled the world for more than half a century, like an artist, note-book in hand.

He once stood and looked on at the emptying of a certain oil-tube ; he did so watch in hand, and accurately timed the operation ; and in so doing offered the perfect type of his profession. The fact acquired might never be of use : it was acquired : another link in the world's huge chain of processes was brought down to figures and placed at the service of the engineer. " The very term mensuration sounds *engineer-like*," I find him writing ; and in truth what the engineer most properly deals with is that which can be measured, weighed, and numbered. The time of any operation in hours and minutes, its cost in pounds, shillings, and pence, the strain upon a given point in foot-pounds—these are his conquests, with which he must continually furnish his mind, and which, after he has acquired them, he must continually apply and exercise. They must be not only entries in note-books, to be hurriedly consulted ; in the actor's phrase, he must be *stale* in them ; in a word of my grandfather's, they must be " fixed in the mind like the ten fingers and ten toes."

These are the certainties of the engineer ; so far he finds a solid footing and clear views. But the province of formulas and constants is restricted. Even the mechanical engineer comes at last to an end of his figures, and must stand up, a practical man, face to face with the discrepancies of nature and the hiatuses of theory. After the machine is finished, and the steam turned on, the next is to drive it ; and experience and an exquisite sympathy must teach him where a weight should be applied or a nut

loosened. With the civil engineer, more properly so called (if anything can be proper with this awkward coinage), the obligation starts with the beginning. He is always the practical man. The rains, the winds and the waves, the complexity and the fitfulness of nature, are always before him. He has to deal with the unpredictable, with those forces (in Smeaton's phrase) that " are subject to no calculation " ; and still he must predict, still calculate them, at his peril. His work is not yet in being, and he must foresee its influence : how it shall deflect the tide, exaggerate the waves, dam back the rain-water, or attract the thunderbolt. He visits a piece of sea-board : and from the inclination and soil of the beach, from the weeds and shell-fish, from the configuration of the coast and the depth of soundings outside, he must deduce what magnitude of waves is to be looked for. He visits a river, its summer water babbling on shallows ; and he must not only read, in a thousand indications, the measure of winter freshets, but be able to predict the violence of occasional great floods. Nay, and more : he must not only consider that which is, but that which may be. Thus I find my grandfather writing, in a report on the North Esk Bridge : " A less waterway might have sufficed, but *the valleys may come to be meliorated by drainage.*" One field drained after another through all that confluence of vales, and we come to a time when they shall precipitate, by so much a more copious and transient flood, as the gush of the flowing drain-pipe is superior to the leakage of a peat.

It is plain there is here but a restricted use for formulas. In this sort of practice, the engineer has need of some transcendental sense. Smeaton, the pioneer, bade him obey his " feelings " ; my father, that " power of estimating obscure forces which supplies a coefficient of its own to every rule." The rules must be everywhere indeed ; but they must everywhere be modified by this transcendental coefficient, everywhere bent to the impression of the trained eye and the *feelings* of the engineer. A sentiment of

physical laws and of the scale of nature, which shall have been strong in the beginning and progressively fortified by observation, must be his guide in the last recourse. I had the most opportunity to observe my father. He would pass hours on the beach, brooding over the waves, counting them, noting their least deflection, noting when they broke. On Tweedside, or by Lyne or Manor, we have spent together whole afternoons; to me, at the time, extremely wearisome; to him, as I am now sorry to think, bitterly mortifying. The river was to me a pretty and various spectacle; I could not see—I could not be made to see—it otherwise. To my father it was a chequer-board of lively forces, which he traced from pool to shallow with minute appreciation and enduring interest. "That bank was being undercut," he might say; "why? Suppose you were to put a groin out here, would not the *filum fluminis* be cast abruptly off across the channel? and where would it impinge upon the other shore? and what would be the result? Or suppose you were to blast that boulder, what would happen? Follow it—use the eyes God has given you—can you not see that a great deal of land would be reclaimed upon this side?" It was to me like school in holidays; but to him, until I had worn him out with my invincible triviality, a delight. Thus he pored over the engineer's voluminous handy-book of nature; thus must, too, have pored my grandfather and uncles.

But it is of the essence of this knowledge, or this knack of mind, to be largely incommunicable. "It cannot be imparted to another," says my father. The verbal casting-net is thrown in vain over these evanescent, inferential relations. Hence the insignificance of much engineering literature. So far as the science can be reduced to formulas or diagrams, the book is to the point; so far as the art depends on intimate study of the ways of nature, the author's words will too often be found vapid. This fact—engineering looks one way, and literature another—was what my grandfather overlooked. All his life long, his

pen was in his hand, piling up a treasury of knowledge, preparing himself against all possible contingencies. Scarce anything fell under his notice but he perceived in it some relation to his work, and chronicled it in the pages of his journal in his always lucid, but sometimes inexact and wordy, style. The Travelling Diary (so he called it) was kept in fascicles of ruled paper, which were at last bound up, rudely indexed, and put by for future reference. Such volumes as have reached me contain a surprising medley: the whole details of his employment in the Northern Lights and his general practice; the whole biography of an enthusiastic engineer. Much of it is useful and curious; much merely otiose; and much can only be described as an attempt to impart that which cannot be imparted in words. Of such are his repeated and heroic descriptions of reefs; monuments of misdirected literary energy, which leave upon the mind of the reader no effect but that of a multiplicity of words and the suggested vignette of a lusty old gentleman scrambling among tangle. It is to be remembered that he came to engineering while yet it was in the egg and without a library, and that he saw the bounds of that profession widen daily. He saw iron ships, steamers, and the locomotive engine, introduced. He lived to travel from Glasgow to Edinburgh in the inside of a forenoon, and to remember that he himself had "often been twelve hours upon the journey, and his grandfather (Lillie) two days"! The profession was still but in its second generation, and had already broken down the barriers of time and space. Who should set a limit to its future encroachments? And hence, with a kind of sanguine pedantry, he pursued his design of "keeping up with the day" and posting himself and his family on every mortal subject. Of this unpractical idealism we shall meet with many instances; there was not a trade, and scarce an accomplishment, but he thought it should form part of the outfit of an engineer; and not content with keeping an encyclopædic diary himself, he would fain have set all his sons to work continuing

and extending it. They were more happily inspired. My father's engineering pocket-book was not a bulky volume ; with its store of pregnant notes and vital formulas, it served him through life, and was not yet filled when he came to die. As for Robert Stevenson and the Travelling Diary, I should be ungrateful to complain, for it has supplied me with many lively traits for this and subsequent chapters ; but I must still remember much of the period of my study there as a sojourn in the Valley of the Shadow.

The duty of the engineer is twofold—to design the work, and to see the work done. We have seen already something of the vociferous thoroughness of the man, upon the cleaning of lamps and the polishing of reflectors. In building, in road-making, in the construction of bridges, in every detail and byway of his employments, he pursued the same ideal. Perfection (with a capital P and violently underscored) was his design. A crack for a penknife, the waste of "six-and-thirty shillings," " the loss of a day or a tide," in each of these he saw and was revolted by the finger of the sloven ; and to spirits intense as his, and immersed in vital undertakings, the slovenly is the dishonest, and wasted time is instantly translated into lives endangered. On this consistent idealism there is but one thing that now and then trenches with a touch of incongruity, and that is his love of the picturesque. As when he laid out a road on Hogarth's line of beauty ; bade a foreman be careful, in quarrying, not " to disfigure the island " ; or regretted in a report that " the great stone, called the *Devil in the Hole*, was blasted or broken down to make road-metal, and for other purposes of the work."

CHAPTER III

THE BUILDING OF THE BELL ROCK

Off the mouths of the Tay and the Forth, thirteen miles from Fifeness, eleven from Arbroath, and fourteen from the Red Head of Angus, lies the Inchcape or Bell Rock. It extends to a length of about fourteen hundred feet, but the part of it discovered at low water to not more than four hundred and twenty-seven. At a little more than half-flood in fine weather the seamless ocean joins over the reef, and at high-water springs it is buried sixteen feet. As the tide goes down, the higher reaches of the rock are seen to be clothed by *Conferva rupestris* as by a sward of grass; upon the more exposed edges, where the currents are most swift and the breach of the sea heaviest, Baderlock or Henware flourishes; and the great Tangle grows at the depth of several fathoms with luxuriance. Before man arrived, and introduced into the silence of the sea the smoke and clangour of a blacksmith's shop, it was a favourite resting-place of seals. The crab and lobster haunt in the crevices; and limpets, mussels, and the white buckie abound.

According to a tradition, a bell had been once hung upon this rock by an abbot of Arbroath,[1] "and being taken

[1] This is, of course, the tradition commemorated by Southey in his ballad of "The Inchcape Bell." Whether true or not, it points to the fact that from the infancy of Scottish navigation, the seafaring mind had been fully alive to the perils of this reef. Repeated attempts had been made to mark the place with beacons, but all efforts were unavailing (one such beacon having been carried away within eight days of its erection) until Robert Stevenson conceived and carried out the idea of the stone tower.

down by a sea-pirate, a year thereafter he perished upon the same rock, with ship and goods, in the righteous judgment of God." From the days of the abbot and the sea-pirate no man had set foot upon the Inchcape, save fishers from the neighbouring coast, or perhaps—for a moment, before the surges swallowed them—the unfortunate victims of shipwreck. The fishers approached the rock with an extreme timidity; but their harvest appears to have been great, and the adventure no more perilous than lucrative. In 1800, on the occasion of my grandfather's first landing, and during the two or three hours which the ebb-tide and the smooth water allowed them to pass upon its shelves, his crew collected upwards of two hundredweight of old metal: pieces of a kedge anchor and a cabin stove, crow-bars, a hinge and lock of a door, a ship's marking-iron, a piece of a ship's caboose, a soldier's bayonet, a cannon ball, several pieces of money, a shoe-buckle, and the like. Such were the spoils of the Bell Rock. But the number of vessels actually lost upon the reef was as nothing to those that were cast away in fruitless efforts to avoid it. Placed right in the fairway of two navigations, and one of these the entrance to the only harbour of refuge between the Downs and the Moray Firth, it breathed abroad along the whole coast an atmosphere of terror and perplexity; and no ship sailed that part of the North Sea at night, but what the ears of those on board would be strained to catch the roaring of the seas on the Bell Rock.

From 1794 onward, the mind of my grandfather had been exercised with the idea of a light upon this formidable danger. To build a tower on a sea rock, eleven miles from shore, and barely uncovered at low water of neaps, appeared a fascinating enterprise. It was something yet unattempted, unessayed; and even now, after it has been lighted for more than eighty years, it is still an exploit that has never been repeated.[1] My grandfather was, besides, but

[1] The particular event which concentrated Mr. Stevenson's attention on the problem of the Bell Rock was the memorable gale

a young man, of an experience comparatively restricted, and a reputation confined to Scotland; and when he prepared his first models, and exhibited them in Merchants' Hall, he can hardly be acquitted of audacity. John Clerk of Eldin stood his friend from the beginning, kept the key of the model room, to which he carried "eminent strangers," and found words of counsel and encouragement beyond price. "Mr. Clerk had been personally known to Smeaton, and used occasionally to speak of him to me," says my grandfather; and again: "I felt regret that I had not the opportunity of a greater range of practice to fit me for such an undertaking; but I was fortified by an expression of my friend Mr. Clerk in one of our conversations. 'This work,' said he, 'is unique, and can be little forwarded by experience of ordinary masonic operations. In this case Smeaton's "Narrative" must be the text-book, and energy and perseverance the pratique.'"

A Bill for the work was introduced into Parliament and lost in the Lords in 1802–3. John Rennie was afterwards, at my grandfather's suggestion, called in council, with the style of chief engineer. The precise meaning attached to these words by any of the parties appears irrecoverable. Chief engineer should have full authority, full responsibility, and a proper share of the emoluments; and there were none of these for Rennie. I find in an appendix a paper which resumes the controversy on this subject; and it will be enough to say here that Rennie did not design the Bell Rock, that he did not execute it, and that he was not paid

of December 1799, when, among many other vessels, H.M.S. *York*, a seventy-four-gun ship, went down with all hands on board. Shortly after this disaster Mr. Stevenson made a careful survey, and prepared his models for a stone tower, the idea of which was at first received with pretty general scepticism. Smeaton's Eddystone tower could not be cited as affording a parallel, for there the rock is not submerged even at high-water, while the problem of the Bell Rock was to build a tower of masonry on a sunken reef far distant from land, covered at every tide to a depth of twelve feet or more, and having thirty-two fathoms' depth of water within a mile of its eastern edge.

for it.[1] From so much of the correspondence as has come down to me, the acquaintance of this man, eleven years his senior, and already famous, appears to have been both useful and agreeable to Robert Stevenson. It is amusing to find my grandfather seeking high and low for a brace of pistols which his colleague had lost by the way between Aberdeen and Edinburgh ; and writing to Messrs. Dollond, " I have not thought it necessary to trouble Mr. Rennie with this order, but *I beg you will see to get two minutes of him as he passes your door* "—a proposal calculated rather from the latitude of Edinburgh than from London, even in 1807. It is pretty, too, to observe with what affectionate regard Smeaton was held in mind by his immediate successors. " Poor old fellow," writes Rennie to Stevenson, " I hope he will now and then take a peep at us, and inspire you with fortitude and courage to brave all difficulties and dangers to accomplish a work which will, if successful,

[1] The grounds for the rejection of the Bill by the House of Lords in 1802–3 had been that the extent of coast over which dues were proposed to be levied would be too great. Before going to Parliament again, the Board of Northern Lights, desiring to obtain support and corroboration for Mr. Stevenson's views, consulted first Telford, who was unable to give the matter his attention, and then (on Stevenson's suggestion) Rennie, who concurred in affirming the practicability of a stone tower, and supported the Bill when it came again before Parliament in 1806. Rennie was afterwards appointed by the Commissioners as advising engineer, whom Stevenson might consult in cases of emergency. It seems certain that the title of chief engineer had in this instance no more meaning than the above. Rennie, in point of fact, proposed certain modifications in Stevenson's plans, which the latter did not accept ; nevertheless Rennie continued to take a kindly interest in the work, and the two engineers remained in friendly correspondence during its progress. The official view taken by the Board as to the quarter in which lay both the merit and the responsibility of the work may be gathered from a minute of the Commissioners at their first meeting held after Stevenson died ; in which they record their regret " at the death of this zealous, faithful, and able officer, *to whom is due the honour of conceiving and executing the Bell Rock Lighthouse.*" The matter is briefly summed up in the " Life " of Robert Stevenson by his son David Stevenson (A. & C. Black, 1878), and fully discussed, on the basis of official facts and figures, by the same writer in a letter to the *Civil Engineers' and Architects' Journal*, 1862.

immortalise you in the annals of fame." The style might be bettered, but the sentiment is charming.

Smeaton was, indeed, the patron saint of the Bell Rock. Undeterred by the sinister fate of Winstanley, he had tackled and solved the problem of the Eddystone ; but his solution had not been in all respects perfect. It remained for my grandfather to outdo him in daring, by applying to a tidal rock those principles which had been already justified by the success of the Eddystone, and to perfect the model by more than one exemplary departure. Smeaton had adopted in his floors the principle of the arch ; each therefore exercised an outward thrust upon the walls, which must be met and combated by embedded chains. My grandfather's flooring-stones, on the other hand, were flat, made part of the outer wall, and were keyed and dovetailed into a central stone, so as to bind the work together and be positive elements of strength. In 1703 Winstanley still thought it possible to erect his strange pagoda, with its open gallery, its florid scrolls and candlesticks : like a rich man's folly for an ornamental water in a park. Smeaton followed ; then Stevenson in his turn corrected such flaws as were left in Smeaton's design ; and with his improvements, it is not too much to say the model was made perfect. Smeaton and Stevenson had between them evolved and finished the sea-tower. No subsequent builder has departed in anything essential from the principles of their design. It remains, and it seems to us as though it must remain for ever, an ideal attained. Every stone in the building, it may interest the reader to know, my grandfather had himself cut out in the model ; and the manner in which the courses were fitted, joggled, trenailed, wedged, and the bond broken, is intricate as a puzzle and beautiful by ingenuity.

In 1806 a second Bill passed both Houses, and the preliminary works were at once begun. The same year the Navy had taken a great harvest of prizes in the North Sea, one of which, a Prussian fishing dogger, flat-bottomed and

rounded at the stem and stern, was purchased to be a floating lightship, and re-named the *Pharos*. By July 1807 she was overhauled, rigged for her new purpose, and turned into the lee of the Isle of May. " It was proposed that the whole party should meet in her and pass the night ; but she rolled from side to side in so extraordinary a manner, that even the most seahardy fled. It was humorously observed of this vessel that she was in danger of making a round turn and appearing with her keel uppermost ; and that she would even turn a halfpenny if laid upon deck." By two o'clock on the morning of the 15th July this purgatorial vessel was moored by the Bell Rock.

A sloop of forty tons had been in the meantime built at Leith, and named the *Smeaton :* by the 7th of August my grandfather set sail in her—

" carrying with him Mr. Peter Logan, foreman builder, and five artificers selected from their having been somewhat accustomed to the sea, the writer being aware of the distressing trial which the floating light would necessarily inflict upon landsmen from her rolling motion. Here he remained till the 10th, and, as the weather was favourable, a landing was effected daily, when the workmen were employed in cutting the large seaweed from the sites of the lighthouse and beacon, which were respectively traced with pickaxes upon the rock. In the meantime the crew of the *Smeaton* was employed in laying down the several sets of moorings within about half a mile of the rock for the convenience of vessels. The artificers, having, fortunately, experienced moderate weather, returned to the work-yard of Arbroath with a good report of their treatment afloat ; when their comrades ashore began to feel some anxiety to see a place of which they had heard so much, and to change the constant operations with the iron and mallet in the process of hewing for an occasional tide's work on the rock, which they figured to themselves as a state of comparative ease and comfort."

I am now for many pages to let my grandfather speak for himself, and tell in his own words the story of his capital achievement. The tall quarto of 533 pages from which the following narrative has been dug out is practically unknown to the general reader, yet good judges have perceived its merit, and it has been named (with flattering wit) " The Romance of Stone and Lime " and " The Robinson

Crusoe of Civil Engineering." The tower was but four years in the building; it took Robert Stevenson, in the midst of his many avocations, no less than fourteen to prepare the *Account*. The title-page is a solid piece of literature of upwards of a hundred words; the table of contents runs to thirteen pages; and the dedication (to that revered monarch, George IV) must have cost him no little study and correspondence. Walter Scott was called in council, and offered one miscorrection which still blots the page. In spite of all this pondering and filing, there remain pages not easy to construe, and inconsistencies not easy to explain away. I have sought to make these disappear, and to lighten a little the baggage with which my grandfather marches; here and there I have rejointed and rearranged a sentence, always with his own words, and all with a reverent and faithful hand; and I offer here to the reader the true Monument of Robert Stevenson with a little of the moss removed from the inscription, and the Portrait of the artist with some superfluous canvas cut away.

I

OPERATIONS OF 1807

Everything being arranged for sailing to the rock on Saturday the 15th, the vessel might have proceeded on the Sunday; but understanding that this would not be so agreeable to the artificers it was deferred until Monday. Here we cannot help observing that the men allotted for the operations at the rock seemed to enter upon the undertaking with a degree of consideration which fully marked their opinion as to the hazardous nature of the undertaking on which they were about to enter. They went in a body to church on Sunday, and whether it was in the ordinary course, or designed for the occasion, the writer is not certain, but the service was, in many respects, suitable to their circumstances. 1807 Sunday, 16th Aug.

The tide happening to fall late in the evening of Monday the 17th, the party, counting twenty-four in number, embarked on board of the *Smeaton* about ten o'clock p.m., and sailed from Arbroath with a gentle breeze at west. Our ship's colours having been flying all day in compliment to the commencement of the work, the other vessels in the harbour also saluted, which made a very gay appearance. A number of the friends and acquaintances of those on board having been thus collected, the piers, though at a late hour, were perfectly crowded, and just as the *Smeaton* cleared the harbour, all on board united in giving three hearty cheers, which were returned by those on shore in such good earnest, that, in the still of the evening, the sound must have been heard in all parts of the town, re-echoing from the walls and lofty turrets of the venerable Abbey of Aberbrothwick. The writer felt much satisfaction at the manner of this parting scene, though he must own that the present rejoicing was, on his part, mingled with occasional reflections upon the responsibility of his situation, which extended to the safety of all who should be engaged in this perilous work. With such sensations he retired to his cabin; but as the artificers were rather inclined to move about the deck than to remain in their confined berths below, his repose was transient, and the vessel being small every motion was necessarily heard. Some who were musically inclined occasionally sung; but he listened with peculiar pleasure to the sailor at the helm, who hummed over Dibdin's characteristic air:— Monday, 17th Aug.

> "They say there's a Providence sits up aloft,
> To keep watch for the life of poor Jack."

1807 Tuesday, 18th Aug.

The weather had been very gentle all night, and, about four in the morning of the 18th, the *Smeaton* anchored. Agreeably to an arranged plan of operations, all hands were called at five o'clock a.m., just as the highest part of the Bell Rock began to show its sable head among the light breakers, which occasionally whitened with the foaming sea. The two boats belonging to the floating light attended the *Smeaton*, to carry the artificers to the rock, as her boat could only accommodate about six or eight sitters. Every one was more eager than his neighbour to leap into the boats, and it required a good deal of management on the part of the coxswains to get men unaccustomed to a boat to take their places for rowing and at the same time trimming her properly. The landing-master and foreman went into one boat, while the writer took charge of another, and steered it to and from the rock. This became the more necessary in the early stages of the work, as places could not be spared for more than two, or at most three, seamen to each boat, who were always stationed, one at the bow, to use the boat-hook in fending or pushing off, and the other at the aftermost oar, to give the proper time in rowing, while the middle oars were double-banked, and rowed by the artificers.

As the weather was extremely fine, with light airs of wind from the east, we landed without difficulty upon the central part of the rock at half-past five, but the water had not yet sufficiently left it for commencing the work. This interval, however, did not pass unoccupied. The first and last of all the principal operations at the Bell Rock were accompanied by three hearty cheers from all hands, and, on occasions like the present, the steward of the ship attended, when each man was regaled with a glass of rum. As the water left the rock about six, some began to bore the holes for the great bats or holdfasts, for fixing the beams of the Beacon-house, while the smith was fully attended in laying out the site of his forge, upon a somewhat sheltered spot of the rock, which also recommended itself from the vicinity of a pool of water for tempering his irons. These preliminary steps occupied about an hour, and as nothing further could be done during this tide towards fixing the forge, the workmen gratified their curiosity by roaming about the rock, which they investigated with great eagerness till the tide overflowed it. Those who had been sick picked dulse (*Fucus palmatus*), which they ate with much seeming appetite ; others were more intent upon collecting limpets for bait, to enjoy the amusement of fishing when they returned on board of the vessel. Indeed, none came away empty-handed, as everything found upon the Bell Rock was considered valuable, being connected with some interesting association. Several

coins and numerous bits of shipwrecked iron, were picked up, of almost every description ; and, in particular, a marking-iron lettered JAMES—a circumstance of which it was thought proper to give notice to the public, as it might lead to the knowledge of some unfortunate shipwreck, perhaps unheard of till this simple occurrence led to the discovery. When the rock began to be overflowed, the landing-master arranged the crews of the respective boats, appointing twelve persons to each. According to a rule which the writer had laid down to himself, he was always the last person who left the rock. 1807

In a short time the Bell Rock was laid completely under water, and the weather being extremely fine, the sea was so smooth that its place could not be pointed out from the appearance of the surface—a circumstance which sufficiently demonstrates the dangerous nature of this rock, even during the day, and in the smoothest and calmest state of the sea. During the interval between the morning and the evening tides, the artificers were variously employed in fishing and reading ; others were busy in drying and adjusting their wet clothes, and one or two amused their companions with the violin and German flute.

About seven in the evening the signal bell for landing on the rock was again rung, when every man was at his quarters. In this service it was thought more appropriate to use the bell than to *pipe* to quarters, as the use of this instrument is less known to the mechanic than the sound of the bell. The landing, as in the morning, was at the eastern harbour. During this tide the seaweed was pretty well cleared from the site of the operations, and also from the tracks leading to the different landing-places ; for walking upon the rugged surface of the Bell Rock, when covered with seaweed, was found to be extremely difficult and even dangerous. Every hand that could possibly be occupied was now employed in assisting the smith to fit up the apparatus for his forge. At 9 p.m. the boats returned to the tender, after other two hours' work, in the same order as formerly —perhaps as much gratified with the success that attended the work of this day as with any other in the whole course of the operations. Although it could not be said that the fatigues of this day had been great, yet all on board retired early to rest. The sea being calm, and no movement on deck, it was pretty generally remarked in the morning that the bell awakened the greater number on board from their first sleep ; and though this observation was not altogether applicable to the writer himself, yet he was not a little pleased to find that thirty people could all at once become so reconciled to a night's quarters within a few hundred paces of the Bell Rock.

1807 Wednesday, 19th Aug.

Being extremely anxious at this time to get forward with fixing the smith's forge, on which the progress of the work at present depended, the writer requested that he might be called at daybreak to learn the landing-master's opinion of the weather from the appearance of the rising sun, a criterion by which experienced seamen can generally judge pretty accurately of the state of the weather for the following day. About five o'clock, on coming upon deck, the sun's upper limb or disc had just begun to appear as if rising from the ocean, and in less than a minute he was seen in the fullest splendour; but after a short interval he was enveloped in a soft cloudy sky, which was considered emblematical of fine weather. His rays had not yet sufficiently dispelled the clouds which hid the land from view, and the Bell Rock being still overflowed, the whole was one expanse of water. This scene in itself was highly gratifying; and, when the morning bell was tolled, we were gratified with the happy forebodings of good weather and the expectation of having both a morning and an evening tide's work on the rock.

The boat which the writer steered happened to be the last which approached the rock at this tide; and, in standing up in the stern, while at some distance, to see how the leading boat entered the creek, he was astonished to observe something in the form of a human figure, in a reclining posture, upon one of the ledges of the rock. He immediately steered the boat through a narrow entrance to the eastern harbour, with a thousand unpleasant sensations in his mind. He thought a vessel or boat must have been wrecked upon the rock during the night; and it seemed probable that the rock might be strewed with dead bodies, a spectacle which could not fail to deter the artificers from returning so freely to their work. In the midst of these reveries the boat took the ground at an improper landing-place; but, without waiting to push her off, he leapt upon the rock, and making his way hastily to the spot which had privately given him alarm, he had the satisfaction to ascertain that he had only been deceived by the peculiar situation and aspect of the smith's anvil and block, which very completely represented the appearance of a lifeless body upon the rock. The writer carefully suppressed his feelings, the simple mention of which might have had a bad effect upon the artificers, and his haste passed for an anxiety to examine the apparatus of the smith's forge, left in an unfinished state at evening tide.

In the course of this morning's work two or three apparently distant peals of thunder were heard, and the atmosphere suddenly became thick and foggy. But as the *Smeaton*, our present tender, was moored at no great distance from the rock, the crew on board

continued blowing with a horn, and occasionally fired a musket, so that the boats got to the ship without difficulty. 1807

The wind this morning inclined from the north-east, and the sky had a heavy and cloudy appearance, but the sea was smooth, though there was an undulating motion on the surface, which indicated easterly winds, and occasioned a slight surf upon the rock. But the boats found no difficulty in landing at the western creek at half-past seven, and, after a good tide's work, left it again about a quarter from eleven. In the evening the artificers landed at half-past seven, and continued till half-past eight, having completed the fixing of the smith's forge, his vice, and a wooden board or bench, which were also batted to a ledge of the rock, to the great joy of all, under a salute of three hearty cheers. From an oversight on the part of the smith, who had neglected to bring his tinder-box and matches from the vessel, the work was prevented from being continued for at least an hour longer. Thursday, 20th Aug.

The smith's shop was, of course, in *open space :* the large bellows were carried to and from the rock every tide, for the serviceable condition of which, together with the tinder-box, fuel, and embers of the former fire, the smith was held responsible. Those who have been placed in situations to feel the inconveniency and want of this useful artisan, will be able to appreciate his value in a case like the present. It often happened, to our annoyance and disappointment, in the early state of the work, when the smith was in the middle of a *favourite heat* in making some useful article, or in sharpening the tools, after the flood-tide had obliged the pickmen to strike work, a sea would come rolling over the rocks, dash out the fire, and endanger his indispensable implement, the bellows. If the sea was smooth, while the smith often stood at work knee-deep in water, the tide rose by imperceptible degrees, first cooling the exterior of the fireplace, or hearth, and then quietly blackening and extinguishing the fire from below. The writer has frequently been amused at the perplexing anxiety of the blacksmith when coaxing his fire and endeavouring to avert the effects of the rising tide.

Everything connected with the forge being now completed, the artificers found no want of sharp tools, and the work went forward with great alacrity and spirit. It was also alleged that the rock had a more habitable appearance from the volumes of smoke which ascended from the smith's shop and the busy noise of his anvil, the operations of the masons, the movements of the boats, and shipping at a distance—all contributed to give life and activity to the scene. This noise and traffic had, however, the effect of almost completely banishing the herd of seals which had hitherto frequented the rock Friday, 21st Aug.

1807 as a resting-place during the period of low water. The rock seemed to be peculiarly adapted to their habits, for, excepting two or three days at neap-tides, a part of it always dries at low water—at least, during the summer season—and as there was good fishing-ground in the neighbourhood, without a human being to disturb or molest them, it had become a very favourite residence of these amphibious animals, the writer having occasionally counted from fifty to sixty playing about the rock at a time. But when they came to be disturbed every tide, and their seclusion was broken in upon by the kindling of great fires, together with the beating of hammers and picks during low water, after hovering about for a time, they changed their place, and seldom more than one or two were to be seen about the rock upon the more detached outlayers which dry partially, whence they seemed to look with that sort of curiosity which is observable in these animals when following a boat.

Saturday, 22nd Aug. Hitherto the artificers had remained on board the *Smeaton*, which was made fast to one of the mooring buoys at a distance only of about a quarter of a mile from the rock, and, of course, a very great conveniency to the work. Being so near, the seamen could never be mistaken as to the progress of the tide, or state of the sea upon the rock, nor could the boats be much at a loss to pull on board of the vessel during fog, or even in very rough weather; as she could be cast loose from her moorings at pleasure, and brought to the lee side of the rock. But the *Smeaton* being only about forty register tons, her accommodations were extremely limited. It may, therefore, be easily imagined that an addition of twenty-four persons to her own crew must have rendered the situation of those on board rather uncomfortable. The only place for the men's hammocks on board being in the hold, they were unavoidably much crowded: and if the weather had required the hatches to be fastened down, so great a number of men could not possibly have been accommodated. To add to this evil, the *co-boose* or cooking-place being upon deck, it would not have been possible to have cooked for so large a company in the event of bad weather.

The stock of water was now getting short, and some necessaries being also wanted for the floating light, the *Smeaton* was despatched for Arbroath; and the writer, with the artificers, at the same time shifted their quarters from her to the floating light.

Although the rock barely made its appearance at this period of the tides till eight o'clock, yet, having now a full mile to row from the floating light to the rock, instead of about a quarter of a mile from the moorings of the *Smeaton*, it was necessary to be earlier astir, and to form different arrangements; breakfast was accordingly

served up at seven o'clock this morning. From the excessive motion of the floating light, the writer had looked forward rather with anxiety to the removal of the workmen to this ship. Some among them, who had been congratulating themselves upon having become sea-hardy while on board the *Smeaton*, had a complete relapse upon returning to the floating light. This was the case with the writer. From the spacious and convenient berthage of the floating light, the exchange to the artificers was, in this respect, much for the better. The boats were also commodious, measuring sixteen feet in length on the keel, so that, in fine weather, their complement of sitters was sixteen persons for each, with which, however, they were rather crowded, but she could not stow two boats of larger dimensions. When there was what is called a breeze of wind, and a swell in the sea, the proper number for each boat could not, with propriety, be rated at more than twelve persons. 1807

When the tide-bell rung the boats were hoisted out, and two active seamen were employed to keep them from receiving damage alongside. The floating light being very buoyant, was so quick in her motions that when those who were about to step from her gunwale into a boat, placed themselves upon a cleat or step on the ship's side, with the man or rail ropes in their hands, they had often to wait for some time till a favourable opportunity occurred for stepping into the boat. While in this situation, with the vessel rolling from side to side, watching the proper time for letting go the man-ropes, it required the greatest dexterity and presence of mind to leap into the boats. One who was rather awkward would often wait a considerable period in this position: at one time his side of the ship would be so depressed that he would touch the boat to which he belonged, while the next sea would elevate him so much that he would see his comrades in the boat on the opposite side of the ship, his friends in the one boat calling to him to "Jump," while those in the boat on the other side, as he came again and again into their view, would jocosely say, "Are you there yet? You seem to enjoy a swing." In this situation it was common to see a person upon each side of the ship for a length of time, waiting to quit his hold.

On leaving the rock to-day a trial of seamanship was proposed amongst the rowers, for by this time the artificers had become tolerably expert in this exercise. By inadvertency some of the oars provided had been made of fir instead of ash, and although a considerable stock had been laid in, the workmen, being at first awkward in the art, were constantly breaking their oars; indeed it was no uncommon thing to see the broken blades of a pair of oars floating astern, in the course of a passage from the rock to the vessel. The

1807 men, upon the whole, had but little work to perform in the course of a day ; for though they exerted themselves extremely hard while on the rock, yet, in the early state of the operations, this could not be continued for more than three or four hours at a time, and as their rations were large—consisting of one pound and a half of beef, one pound of ship biscuit, eight ounces oatmeal, two ounces barley, two ounces butter, three quarts of small beer, with vegetables and salt—they got into excellent spirits when free of sea-sickness. The rowing of the boats against each other became a favourite amusement, which was rather a fortunate circumstance, as it must have been attended with much inconvenience had it been found necessary to employ a sufficient number of sailors for this purpose. The writer, therefore, encouraged this spirit of emulation, and the speed of their respective boats became a favourite topic. Premiums for boat-races were instituted, which were contended for with great eagerness, and the respective crews kept their stations in the boats with as much precision as they kept their beds on board of the ship. With these and other pastimes, when the weather was favourable, the time passed away among the inmates of the forecastle and waist of the ship. The writer looks back with interest upon the hours of solitude which he spent in this lonely ship with his small library.

This being the first Saturday that the artificers were afloat, all hands were served with a glass of rum and water at night, to drink the sailors' favourite toast of "Wives and Sweethearts." It was customary, upon these occasions, for the seamen and artificers to collect in the galley, when the musical instruments were put in requisition : for, according to invariable practice, every man must play a tune, sing a song, or tell a story.

Sunday, 23rd Aug. Having, on the previous evening, arranged matters with the landing-master as to the business of the day, the signal was rung for all hands at half-past seven this morning. In the early state of the spring-tides the artificers went to the rock before breakfast, but as the tides fell later in the day, it became necessary to take this meal before leaving the ship. At eight o'clock all hands were assembled on the quarter-deck for prayers, a solemnity which was gone through in as orderly a manner as circumstances would admit. When the weather permitted, the flags of the ship were hung up as an awning or screen, forming the quarter-deck into a distinct compartment ; the pendant was also hoisted at the mainmast, and a large ensign flag was displayed over the stern ; and lastly, the ship's companion, or top of the staircase, was covered with the *flag proper* of the Light-house Service, on which the Bible was laid. A particular toll of the bell called all hands to the quarter-deck, when the writer read a

chapter of the Bible, and, the whole ship's company being uncovered, he also read the impressive prayer composed by the Reverend Dr. Brunton, one of the ministers of Edinburgh. 1807

Upon concluding this service, which was attended with becoming reverence and attention, all on board retired to their respective berths to breakfast, and, at half-past nine, the bell again rung for the artificers to take their stations in their respective boats. Some demur having been evinced on board about the propriety of working on Sunday, which had hitherto been touched upon as delicately as possible, all hands being called aft, the writer, from the quarter-deck, stated generally the nature of the service, expressing his hopes that every man would feel himself called upon to consider the erection of a lighthouse on the Bell Rock, in every point of view, as a work of necessity and mercy. He knew that scruples had existed with some, and these had, indeed, been fairly and candidly urged before leaving the shore ; but it was expected that, after having seen the critical nature of the rock, and the necessity of the measure, every man would now be satisfied of the propriety of embracing all opportunities of landing on the rock when the state of the weather would permit. The writer further took them to witness that it did not proceed from want of respect for the appointments and established forms of religion that he had himself adopted the resolution of attending the Bell Rock works on the Sunday ; but, as he hoped, from a conviction that it was his bounden duty, on the strictest principles of morality. At the same time it was intimated that, if any were of a different opinion, they should be perfectly at liberty to hold their sentiments without the imputation of contumacy or disobedience ; the only difference would be in regard to the pay.

Upon stating this much, he stepped into his boat, requesting all who were so disposed to follow him. The sailors, from their habits, found no scruple on this subject, and all of the artificers, though a little tardy, also embarked, excepting four of the masons, who, from the beginning, mentioned that they would decline working on Sundays. It may here be noticed that throughout the whole of the operations it was observable that the men wrought, if possible, with more keenness upon the Sundays than at other times, from an impression that they were engaged in a work of imperious necessity, which required every possible exertion. On returning to the floating light, after finishing the tide's work, the boats were received by the part of the ship's crew left on board with the usual attention of handing ropes to the boats and helping the artificers on board ; but the four masons who had absented themselves from the work did not appear upon deck

1807 Monday, 24th Aug. The boats left the floating light at a quarter-past nine o'clock this morning, and the work began at three-quarters past nine; but as the neap-tides were approaching the working time at the rock became gradually shorter, and it was now with difficulty that two and a half hours' work could be got. But so keenly had the workmen entered into the spirit of the Beacon-house operations, that they continued to bore the holes in the rock till some of them were knee-deep in water.

The operations at this time were entirely directed to the erection of the beacon, in which every man felt an equal interest, as at this critical period the slightest casualty to any of the boats at the rock might have been fatal to himself individually, while it was perhaps peculiar to the writer more immediately to feel for the safety of the whole. Each log or upright beam of the beacon was to be fixed to the rock by two strong and massive bats or stanchions of iron. These bats, for the fixture of the principal and diagonal beams and bracing chains, required fifty-four holes, each measuring two inches in diameter and eighteen inches in depth. There had already been so considerable a progress made in boring and excavating the holes that the writer's hopes of getting the beacon erected this year began to be more and more confirmed, although it was now advancing towards what was considered the latter end of the proper working season at the Bell Rock. The foreman joiner, Mr. Francis Watt, was accordingly appointed to attend at the rock to-day, when the necessary levels were taken for the step or seat of each particular beam of the beacon, that they might be cut to their respective lengths, to suit the inequalities of the rock; several of the stanchions were also tried into their places, and other necessary observations made, to prevent mistakes on the application of the apparatus, and to facilitate the operations when the beams came to be set up, which would require to be done in the course of a single tide.

Tuesday, 25th Aug. We had now experienced an almost unvaried tract of light airs of easterly wind, with clear weather in the fore-part of the day and fog in the evenings. To-day, however, it sensibly changed; when the wind came to the south-west, and blew a fresh breeze. At nine a.m. the bell rung, and the boats were hoisted out, and though the artificers were now pretty well accustomed to tripping up and down the sides of the floating light, yet it required more seamanship this morning than usual. It therefore afforded some merriment to those who had got fairly seated in their respective boats to see the difficulties which attended their companions, and the hesitating manner in which they quitted hold of the man-ropes in leaving the ship.

The passage to the rock was tedious, and the boats did not reach it till half-past ten. 1807

It being now the period of neap-tides, the water only partially left the rock, and some of the men who were boring on the lower ledges of the site of the beacon stood knee-deep in water. The situation of the smith to-day was particularly disagreeable, but his services were at all times indispensable. As the tide did not leave the site of the forge, he stood in the water, and as there was some roughness on the surface it was with considerable difficulty that, with the assistance of the sailors, he was enabled to preserve alive his fire ; and, while his feet were immersed in water, his face was not only scorched but continually exposed to volumes of smoke, accompanied with sparks from the fire, which were occasionally set up owing to the strength and direction of the wind.

The wind had shifted this morning to N.N.W., with rain, and was blowing what sailors call a fresh breeze. To speak, perhaps, somewhat more intelligibly to the general reader, the wind was such that a fishing-boat could just carry full sail. But as it was of importance, specially in the outset of the business, to keep up the spirit of enterprise for landing on all practicable occasions, the writer, after consulting with the landing-master, ordered the bell to be rung for embarking, and at half-past eleven the boats reached the rock, and left it again at a quarter-past twelve, without, however, being able to do much work, as the smith could not be set to work from the smallness of the ebb and the strong breach of sea, which lashed with great force among the bars of the forge. Wednesday, 26th Aug

Just as we were about to leave the rock the wind shifted to the S.W., and, from a fresh gale, it became what seamen term a hard gale, or such as would have required the fisherman to take in two or three reefs in his sail. It is a curious fact that the respective tides of ebb and flood are apparent upon the shore about an hour and a half sooner than at the distance of three or four miles in the offing. But what seems chiefly interesting here is that the tides around this small sunken rock should follow exactly the same laws as on the extensive shores of the mainland. When the boats left the Bell Rock to-day it was overflowed by the flood-tide, but the floating light did not swing round to the flood-tide for more than an hour afterwards. Under this disadvantage the boats had to struggle with the ebb-tide and a hard gale of wind, so that it was with the greatest difficulty they reached the floating light. Had this gale happened in spring-tides when the current was strong we must have been driven to sea in a very helpless condition.

The boat which the writer steered was considerably behind the

1807 other, one of the masons having unluckily broken his oar. Our prospect of getting on board, of course, became doubtful, and our situation was rather perilous, as the boat shipped so much sea that it occupied two of the artificers to bale and clear her of water. When the oar gave way we were about half a mile from the ship, but, being fortunately to windward, we got into the wake of the floating light, at about 250 fathoms astern, just as the landing-master's boat reached the vessel. He immediately streamed or floated a life-buoy astern, with a line which was always in readiness, and by means of this useful implement the boat was towed alongside of the floating light, where, from her rolling motion, it required no small management to get safely on board, as the men were worn out with their exertions in pulling from the rock. On the present occasion the crews of both boats were completely drenched with spray, and those who sat upon the bottom of the boats to bale them were sometimes pretty deep in the water before it could be cleared out. After getting on board, all hands were allowed an extra dram, and, having shifted and got a warm and comfortable dinner, the affair, it is believed, was little more thought of.

Thursday, 27th Aug. The tides were now in that state which sailors term the dead of the neap, and it was not expected that any part of the rock would be seen above water to-day; at any rate, it was obvious, from the experience of yesterday, that no work could be done upon it, and therefore the artificers were not required to land. The wind was at west, with light breezes, and fine clear weather; and as it was an object with the writer to know the actual state of the Bell Rock at neap-tides, he got one of the boats manned, and, being accompanied by the landing-master, went to it at a quarter-past twelve. The parts of the rock that appeared above water being very trifling, were covered by every wave, so that no landing was made. Upon trying the depth of water with a boat-hook, particularly on the sites of the lighthouse and beacon, on the former, at low water, the depth was found to be three feet, and on the central parts of the latter it was ascertained to be two feet eight inches. Having made these remarks, the boat returned to the ship at two p.m., and the weather being good, the artificers were found amusing themselves with fishing. The *Smeaton* came from Arbroath this afternoon, and made fast to her moorings, having brought letters and newspapers, with parcels of clean linen, etc., for the workmen, who were also made happy by the arrival of three of their comrades from the workyard ashore. From these men they not only received all the news of the workyard, but seemed themselves to enjoy great pleasure in communicating whatever they considered to be interesting with regard to the

rock. Some also got letters from their friends at a distance, the postage of which for the men afloat was always free, so that they corresponded the more readily. 1807

The site of the building having already been carefully traced out with the pick-axe, the artificers this day commenced the excavation of the rock for the foundation or first course of the lighthouse. Four men only were employed at this work, while twelve continued at the site of the beacon-house, at which every possible opportunity was embraced, till this essential part of the operations should be completed.

The floating light's bell rung this morning at half-past four o'clock, as a signal for the boats to be got ready, and the landing took place at half-past five. In passing the *Smeaton* at her moorings near the rock, her boat followed with eight additional artificers who had come from Arbroath with her at last trip, but there being no room for them in the floating light's boats, they had continued on board. The weather did not look very promising in the morning, the wind blowing pretty fresh from W.S.W. : and had it not been that the writer calculated upon having a vessel so much at command, in all probability he would not have ventured to land. The *Smeaton* rode at what sailors call a *salvagee*, with a cross-head made fast to the floating buoy. This kind of attachment was found to be more convenient than the mode of passing the hawser through the ring of the buoy when the vessel was to be made fast. She had then only to be steered very close to the buoy, when the salvagee was laid hold of with a boat-hook, and the *bite* of the hawser thrown over the cross-head. But the salvagee, by this method, was always left at the buoy, and was, of course, more liable to chafe and wear than a hawser passed through the ring, which could be wattled with canvas, and shifted at pleasure. The salvagee and cross method is, however, much practised ; but the experience of this morning showed it to be very unsuitable for vessels riding in an exposed situation for any length of time. Wednesday 2nd Sept.

Soon after the artificers landed they commenced work ; but the wind coming to blow hard, the *Smeaton's* boat and crew, who had brought their complement of eight men to the rock, went off to examine her riding ropes, and see that they were in proper order. The boat had no sooner reached the vessel than she went adrift, carrying the boat along with her. By the time that she was got round to make a tack towards the rock, she had drifted at least three miles to leeward, with the praam boat astern ; and, having both the wind and a tide against her, the writer perceived, with no little anxiety, that she could not possibly return to the rock till long after

1807 its being overflowed ; for, owing to the anomaly of the tides formerly noticed, the Bell Rock is completely under water when the ebb abates to the offing.

In this perilous predicament, indeed, he found himself placed between hope and despair—but certainly the latter was by much the most predominant feeling of his mind—situate upon a sunken rock in the middle of the ocean, which, in the progress of the flood-tide, was to be laid under water to the depth of at least twelve feet in a stormy sea. There were this morning thirty-two persons in all upon the rock, with only two boats, whose complement, even in good weather, did not exceed twenty-four sitters ; but to row to the floating light with so much wind, and in so heavy a sea, a complement of eight men for each boat was as much as could, with propriety, be attempted, so that, in this way, about one-half of our number was unprovided for. Under these circumstances, had the writer ventured to despatch one of the boats in expectation of either working the *Smeaton* sooner up towards the rock, or in hopes of getting her boat brought to our assistance, this must have given an immediate alarm to the artificers, each of whom would have insisted upon taking to his own boat, and leaving the eight artificers belonging to the *Smeaton* to their chance. Of course a scuffle might have ensued, and it is hard to say, in the ardour of men contending for life, where it might have ended. It has even been hinted to the writer that a party of the *pickmen* were determined to keep exclusively to their own boat against all hazards.

The unfortunate circumstance of the *Smeaton* and her boat having drifted was, for a considerable time, only known to the writer and to the landing-master, who removed to the farther point of the rock, where he kept his eye steadily upon the progress of the vessel. While the artificers were at work, chiefly in sitting or kneeling postures, excavating the rock, or boring with the jumpers, and while their numerous hammers, with the sound of the smith's anvil, continued, the situation of things did not appear so awful. In this state of suspense, with almost certain destruction at hand, the water began to rise upon those who were at work on the lower parts of the sites of the beacon and lighthouse. From the run of sea upon the rock, the forge fire was also sooner extinguished this morning than usual, and the volumes of smoke having ceased, objects in every direction became visible from all parts of the rock. After having had about three hours' work, the men began, pretty generally, to make towards their respective boats for their jackets and stockings, when, to their astonishment, instead of three, they found only two boats, the third being adrift with the *Smeaton*. Not a word was uttered by any one,

but all appeared to be silently calculating their numbers, and looking to each other with evident marks of perplexity depicted in their countenances. The landing-master, conceiving that blame might be attached to him for allowing the boat to leave the rock, still kept at a distance. At this critical moment the author was standing upon an elevated part of Smith's Ledge, where he endeavoured to mark the progress of the *Smeaton*, not a little surprised that her crew did not cut the praam adrift, which greatly retarded her way, and amazed that some effort was not making to bring at least the boat, and attempt our relief. The workmen looked steadfastly upon the writer, and turned occasionally towards the vessel, still far to leeward.[1] All this passed in the most perfect silence, and the melancholy solemnity of the group made an impression never to be effaced from his mind. 1807

The writer had all along been considering of various schemes—providing the men could be kept under command—which might be put in practice for the general safety, in hopes that the *Smeaton* might be able to pick up the boats to leeward, when they were obliged to leave the rock. He was, accordingly, about to address the artificers on the perilous nature of their circumstances, and to propose that all hands should unstrip their upper clothing when the higher parts of the rock were laid under water; that the seamen should remove every unnecessary weight and encumbrance from the boats; that a specified number of men should go into each boat, and that the remainder should hang by the gunwales, while the boats were to be rowed gently towards the *Smeaton*, as the course to the *Pharos*, or floating light, lay rather to windward of the rock. But when he attempted to speak his mouth was so parched that his tongue refused utterance, and he now learned by experience that the saliva is as necessary as the tongue itself for speech. He turned to one of the pools on the rock and lapped a little water, which produced immediate relief. But what was his happiness, when on rising from this unpleasant beverage, some one called out, "A boat! a boat!" and, on looking around, at no great distance, a large boat was seen through the haze making towards the rock. This at once enlivened and rejoiced every heart. The timeous visitor proved to be James Spink, the Bell Rock pilot, who had come express from Arbroath with letters. Spink had for some time seen the *Smeaton*, and had even supposed, from the state of the weather, that all hands were on board of her till he approached more nearly and observed people upon the rock; but not supposing that the assistance of his boat was necessary to carry the artificers off the rock, he anchored on the

[1] "Nothing was said, but I was *looked out of countenance*," he says in a letter.

1807 lee-side and began to fish, waiting, as usual, till the letters were sent for, as the pilot-boat was too large and unwieldy for approaching the rock when there was any roughness or run of the sea at the entrance of the landing creeks.

Upon this fortunate change of circumstances, sixteen of the artificers were sent, at two trips, in one of the boats, with instructions for Spink to proceed with them to the floating light. This being accomplished, the remaining sixteen followed in the two boats belonging to the service of the rock. Every one felt the most perfect happiness at leaving the Bell Rock this morning, though a very hard and dangerous passage to the floating light still awaited us, as the wind by this time had increased to a pretty hard gale, accompanied with a considerable swell of sea. Every one was as completely drenched in water as if he had been dragged astern of the boats. The writer, in particular, being at the helm, found, on getting on board, that his face and ears were completely coated with a thin film of salt from the sea spray, which broke constantly over the bows of the boat. After much baling of water and severe work at the oars, the three boats reached the floating light, where some new difficulties occurred in getting on board in safety, owing partly to the exhausted state of the men, and partly to the violent rolling of the vessel.

As the tide flowed, it was expected that the *Smeaton* would have got to windward; but, seeing that all was safe, after tacking for several hours and making little progress, she bore away for Arbroath, with the praam-boat. As there was now too much wind for the pilot-boat to return to Arbroath, she was made fast astern of the floating light, and the crew remained on board till next day, when the weather moderated. There can be very little doubt that the appearance of James Spink with his boat on this critical occasion was the means of preventing the loss of lives at the rock this morning. When these circumstances, some years afterwards, came to the knowledge of the Board, a small pension was ordered to our faithful pilot, then in his seventieth year; and he still continues to wear the uniform clothes and badge of the Lighthouse service. Spink is a remarkably strong man, whose *tout ensemble* is highly characteristic of a North-country fisherman. He usually dresses in a *pé-jacket*, cut after a particular fashion, and wears a large, flat, blue bonnet. A striking likeness of Spink in his pilot-dress, with the badge or insignia on his left arm which is characteristic of the boatmen in the service of the Northern Lights, has been taken by Howe, and is in the writer's possession.

Thursday, 3rd Sept. The bell rung this morning at five o'clock, but the writer must acknowledge, from the circumstances of yesterday, that its sound was extremely unwelcome. This appears also to have been the

feelings of the artificers, for when they came to be mustered, out of twenty-six, only eight, besides the foreman and seamen, appeared upon deck to accompany the writer to the rock. Such are the baneful effects of anything like misfortune or accident connected with a work of this description. The use of argument to persuade the men to embark in cases of this kind would have been out of place, as it is not only discomfort, or even the risk of the loss of a limb, but life itself that becomes the question. The boats, notwithstanding the thinness of our ranks, left the vessel at half-past five. The rough weather of yesterday having proved but a summer's gale, the wind came to-day in gentle breezes; yet, the atmosphere being cloudy, it had not a very favourable appearance. The boats reached the rock at six a.m., and the eight artificers who landed were employed in clearing out the bat-holes for the beacon-house, and had a very prosperous tide of four hours' work, being the longest yet experienced by half an hour. 1807

The boats left the rock again at ten o'clock, and the weather having cleared up as we drew near the vessel, the eighteen artificers who had remained on board were observed upon deck, but as the boats approached they sought their way below, being quite ashamed of their conduct. This was the only instance of refusal to go to the rock which occurred during the whole progress of the work, excepting that of the four men who declined working upon Sunday, a case which the writer did not conceive to be at all analogous to the present. It may here be mentioned, much to the credit of these four men, that they stood foremost in embarking for the rock this morning.

It was fortunate that a landing was not attempted this evening, for at eight o'clock the wind shifted to E.S.E., and at ten it had become a hard gale, when fifty fathoms of the floating light's hempen cable were veered out. The gale still increasing, the ship rolled and laboured excessively, and at midnight eighty fathoms of cable were veered out; while the sea continued to strike the vessel with a degree of force which had not before been experienced. Saturday, 5th Sept.

During the last night there was little rest on board of the *Pharos*, and daylight, though anxiously wished for, brought no relief, as the gale continued with unabated violence. The sea struck so hard upon the vessel's bows that it rose in great quantities, or in "green seas," as the sailors termed it, which were carried by the wind as far aft as the quarter-deck, and not unfrequently over the stern of the ship altogether. It fell occasionally so heavily on the skylight of the writer's cabin, though so far aft as to be within five feet of the helm, that the glass was broken to pieces before the dead-light could be got into its place, so that the water poured down in great quantities. Sunday, 6th Sept.

1807 In shutting out the water, the admission of light was prevented, and in the morning all continued in the most comfortless state of darkness. About ten o'clock a.m. the wind shifted to N.E., and blew, if possible, harder than before, and it was accompanied by a much heavier swell of sea. In the course of the gale, the part of the cable in the hause-hole had been so often shifted that nearly the whole length of one of her hempen cables, of 120 fathoms, had been veered out, besides the chain-moorings. The cable, for its preservation, was also carefully served or wattled with pieces of canvas round the windlass, and with leather well greased in the hause-hole. In this state things remained during the whole day, every sea which struck the vessel—and the seas followed each other in close succession—causing her to shake, and all on board occasionally to tremble. At each of these strokes of the sea the rolling and pitching of the vessel ceased for a time, and her motion was felt as if she had either broke adrift before the wind or were in the act of sinking; but, when another sea came, she ranged up against it with great force, and this became the regular intimation of our being still riding at anchor.

About eleven o'clock, the writer with some difficulty got out of bed, but, in attempting to dress, he was thrown twice upon the floor at the opposite end of the cabin. In an undressed state he made shift to get about half-way up the companion-stairs, with an intention to observe the state of the sea and of the ship upon deck; but he no sooner looked over the companion than a heavy sea struck the vessel, which fell on the quarter-deck, and rushed downstairs in the officers' cabin in so considerable a quantity that it was found necessary to lift one of the scuttles in the floor, to let the water into the limbers of the ship, as it dashed from side to side in such a manner as to run into the lower tier of beds. Having been foiled in this attempt, and being completely wetted, he again got below and went to bed. In this state of the weather the seamen had to move about the necessary or indispensable duties of the ship with the most cautious use both of hands and feet, while it required all the art of the landsman to keep within the precincts of his bed. The writer even found himself so much tossed about that it became necessary, in some measure, to shut himself in bed, in order to avoid being thrown upon the floor. Indeed, such was the motion of the ship that it seemed wholly impracticable to remain in any other than a lying posture. On deck the most stormy aspect presented itself, while below all was wet and comfortless.

About two o'clock p.m. a great alarm was given throughout the ship from the effects of a very heavy sea which struck her, and almost filled the waist, pouring down into the berths below, through every

chink and crevice of the hatches and skylights. From the motion of the vessel being thus suddenly deadened or checked, and from the flowing in of the water above, it is believed there was not an individual on board who did not think, at the moment, that the vessel had foundered, and was in the act of sinking. The writer could withstand this no longer, and as soon as she again began to range to the sea he determined to make another effort to get upon deck. In the first instance, however, he groped his way in darkness from his own cabin through the berths of the officers, where all was quietness. He next entered the galley and other compartments occupied by the artificers. Here also all was shut up in darkness, the fire having been drowned out in the early part of the gale. Several of the artificers were employed in prayer, repeating psalms and other devotional exercises in a full tone of voice; others protesting that, if they should fortunately get once more on shore, no one should ever see them afloat again. With the assistance of the landing-master, the writer made his way, holding on step by step, among the numerous impediments which lay in the way. Such was the creaking noise of the bulkheads or partitions, the dashing of the water, and the whistling noise of the winds, that it was hardly possible to break in upon such a confusion of sounds. In one or two instances, anxious and repeated inquiries were made by the artificers as to the state of things upon deck, to which the captain made the usual answer, that it could not blow long in this way, and that we must soon have better weather. The next berth in succession, moving forward in the ship, was that allotted for the seamen. Here the scene was considerably different. Having reached the middle of this darksome berth without its inmates being aware of any intrusion, the writer had the consolation of remarking that, although they talked of bad weather and the cross accidents of the sea, yet the conversation was carried on in that sort of tone and manner which bespoke an ease and composure of mind highly creditable to them and pleasing to him. The writer immediately accosted the seamen about the state of the ship. To these inquiries they replied that the vessel being light, and having but little hold of the water, no top-rigging, with excellent ground-tackle, and everything being fresh and new, they felt perfect confidence in their situation. 1807

It being impossible to open any of the hatches in the fore part of the ship in communicating with the deck, the watch was changed by passing through the several berths to the companion-stair leading to the quarter-deck. The writer, therefore, made the best of his way aft, and, on a second attempt to look out, he succeeded, and saw indeed an astonishing sight. The sea or waves appeared to be ten

1807 or fifteen feet in height of unbroken water, and every approaching billow seemed as if it would overwhelm our vessel, but she continued to rise upon the waves and to fall between the seas in a very wonderful manner. It seemed to be only those seas which caught her in the act of rising which struck her with so much violence and threw such quantities of water aft. On deck there was only one solitary individual looking out, to give the alarm in the event of the ship breaking from her moorings. The seaman on watch continued only two hours; he who kept watch at this time was a tall, slender man of a black complexion; he had no greatcoat nor over-all of any kind, but was simply dressed in his ordinary jacket and trousers; his hat was tied under his chin with a napkin, and he stood aft the foremast, to which he had lashed himself with a gasket or small rope round his waist, to prevent his falling upon deck or being washed overboard. When the writer looked up, he appeared to smile, which afforded a further symptom of the confidence of the crew in their ship. This person on watch was as completely wetted as if he had been drawn through the sea, which was given as a reason for his not putting on a greatcoat, that he might wet as few of his clothes as possible, and have a dry shift when he went below. Upon deck everything that was movable was out of sight, having either been stowed below, previous to the gale, or been washed overboard. Some trifling parts of the quarter boards were damaged by the breach of the sea; and one of the boats upon deck was about one-third full of water, the oyle-hole or drain having been accidentally stopped up, and part of her gunwale had received considerable injury. These observations were hastily made, and not without occasionally shutting the companion, to avoid being wetted by the successive seas which broke over the bows and fell upon different parts of the deck according to the impetus with which the waves struck the vessel. By this time it was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the gale, which had now continued with unabated force for twenty-seven hours, had not the least appearance of going off.

In the dismal prospect of undergoing another night like the last, and being in imminent hazard of parting from our cable, the writer thought it necessary to advise with the master and officers of the ship as to the probable event of the vessel's drifting from her moorings. They severally gave it as their opinion that we had now every chance of riding out the gale, which, in all probability, could not continue with the same fury many hours longer; and that even if she should part from her anchor, the storm-sails had been laid to hand, and could be bent in a very short time. They further stated that from the direction of the wind being N.E., she would sail up the Firth of

Forth to Leith Roads. But if this should appear doubtful, after passing the Island and Light of May, it might be advisable at once to steer for Tyningham Sands, on the western side of Dunbar, and there run the vessel ashore. If this should happen at the time of high-water, or during the ebbing of the tide, they were of opinion, from the flatness and strength of the floating light, that no danger would attend her taking the ground, even with a very heavy sea. The writer, seeing the confidence which these gentlemen possessed with regard to the situation of things, found himself as much relieved with this conversation as he had previously been with the seeming indifference of the forecastle-men, and the smile of the watch upon deck, though literally lashed to the foremast. From this time he felt himself almost perfectly at ease; at any rate, he was entirely resigned to the ultimate result. 1807

About six o'clock in the evening the ship's company was heard moving upon deck, which on the present occasion was rather the cause of alarm. The writer accordingly rang his bell to know what was the matter, when he was informed by the steward that the weather looked considerably better, and that the men upon deck were endeavouring to ship the smoke-funnel of the galley that the people might get some meat. This was a more favourable account than had been anticipated. During the last twenty-one hours he himself had not only had nothing to eat, but he had almost never passed a thought on the subject. Upon the mention of a change of weather, he sent the steward to learn how the artificers felt, and on his return he stated that they now seemed to be all very happy, since the cook had begun to light the galley-fire and make preparations for the suet-pudding of Sunday, which was the only dish to be attempted for the mess, from the ease with which it could both be cooked and served up.

The principal change felt upon the ship as the wind abated was her increased rolling motion, but the pitching was much diminished, and now hardly any sea came farther aft than the foremast: but she rolled so extremely hard as frequently to dip and take in water over the gunwales and rails in the waist. By nine o'clock all hands had been refreshed by the exertions of the cook and steward, and were happy in the prospect of the worst of the gale being over. The usual complement of men was also now set on watch, and more quietness was experienced throughout the ship. Although the previous night had been a very restless one, it had not the effect of inducing repose in the writer's berth on the succeeding night; for having been so much tossed about in bed during the last thirty hours, he found no easy spot to turn to, and his body was all sore to the touch, which

1807 ill accorded with the unyielding materials with which his bed-place was surrounded.

Monday, 7th Sept. This morning, about eight o'clock, the writer was agreeably surprised to see the scuttle of his cabin skylight removed, and the bright rays of the sun admitted. Although the ship continued to roll excessively, and the sea was still running very high, yet the ordinary business on board seemed to be going forward on deck. It was impossible to steady a telescope, so as to look minutely at the progress of the waves and trace their breach upon the Bell Rock; but the height to which the cross-running waves rose in sprays when they met each other was truly grand, and the continued roar and noise of the sea was very perceptible to the ear. To estimate the height of the sprays at forty or fifty feet would surely be within the mark. Those of the workmen who were not much afflicted with sea-sickness came upon deck, and the wetness below being dried up, the cabins were again brought into a habitable state. Every one seemed to meet as if after a long absence, congratulating his neighbour upon the return of good weather. Little could be said as to the comfort of the vessel, but after riding out such a gale, no one felt the least doubt or hesitation as to the safety and good condition of her moorings. The master and mate were extremely anxious, however, to heave in the hempen cable, and see the state of the clinch or iron ring of the chain-cable. But the vessel rolled at such a rate that the seamen could not possibly keep their feet at the windlass nor work the handspikes, though it had been several times attempted since the gale took off.

About twelve noon, however, the vessel's motion was observed to be considerably less, and the sailors were enabled to walk upon deck with some degree of freedom. But, to the astonishment of every one, it was soon discovered that the floating light was adrift! The windlass was instantly manned, and the men soon gave out that there was no strain upon the cable. The mizzen sail, which was bent for the occasional purpose of making the vessel ride more easily to the tide, was immediately set, and the other sails were also hoisted in a short time, when, in no small consternation, we bore away about one mile to the south-westward of the former station, and there let go the best bower anchor and cable in twenty fathoms water, to ride until the swell of the sea should fall, when it might be practicable to grapple for the moorings, and find a better anchorage for the ship.

Tuesday, 15th Sept. This morning, at five a.m., the bell rung as a signal for landing upon the rock, a sound which, after a lapse of ten days, it is believed was welcomed by every one on board. There being a heavy breach

of sea at the eastern creek, we landed, though not without difficulty, on the western side, every one seeming more eager than another to get upon the rock; and never did hungry men sit down to a hearty meal with more appetite than the artificers began to pick the dulse from the rocks. This marine plant had the effect of reviving the sickly, and seemed to be no less relished by those who were more hardy. 1807

While the water was ebbing, and the men were roaming in quest of their favourite morsel, the writer was examining the effects of the storm upon the forge and loose apparatus left upon the rock. Six large blocks of granite which had been landed, by way of experiment, on the 1st instant, were now removed from their places and, by the force of the sea, thrown over a rising ledge into a hole at the distance of twelve or fifteen paces from the place on which they had been landed. This was a pretty good evidence both of the violence of the storm and the agitation of the sea upon the rock. The safety of the smith's forge was always an object of essential regard. The ash-pan of the hearth or fireplace, with its weighty cast-iron back, had been washed from their places of supposed security; the chains of attachment had been broken, and these ponderous articles were found at a very considerable distance in a hole on the western side of the rock; while the tools and picks of the Aberdeen masons were scattered about in every direction. It is, however, remarkable that not a single article was ultimately lost.

This being the night on which the floating light was advertised to be lighted, it was accordingly exhibited, to the great joy of every one.

The writer was made happy to-day by the return of the Light-house yacht from a voyage to the Northern Lighthouses. Having immediately removed on board of this fine vessel of eighty-one tons register, the artificers gladly followed; for, though they found themselves more pinched for accommodation on board of the yacht, and still more so in the *Smeaton*, yet they greatly preferred either of these to the *Pharos*, or floating light, on account of her rolling motion, though in all respects fitted up for their conveniency. Wednesday, 16th Sept.

The writer called them to the quarter-deck and informed them that, having been one month afloat, in terms of their agreement they were now at liberty to return to the workyard at Arbroath if they preferred this to continuing at the Bell Rock. But they replied that, in the prospect of soon getting the beacon erected upon the rock, and having made a change from the floating light, they were now perfectly reconciled to their situation, and would remain afloat till the end of the working season.

1807 Thursday, 17th Sept. The wind was at N.E. this morning, and though there were only light airs, yet there was a pretty heavy swell coming ashore upon the rock. The boats landed at half-past seven o'clock a.m., at the creek on the southern side of the rock, marked Port Hamilton. But as one of the boats was in the act of entering this creek, the seaman at the bow-oar, who had just entered the service, having inadvertently expressed some fear from a heavy sea which came rolling towards the boat, and one of the artificers having at the same time looked round and missed a stroke with his oar, such a preponderance was thus given to the rowers upon the opposite side that when the wave struck the boat it threw her upon a ledge of shelving rocks, where the water left her, and she having *kanted* to seaward, the next wave completely filled her with water. After making considerable efforts the boat was again got afloat in the proper track of the creek, so that we landed without any other accident than a complete ducking. There being no possibility of getting a shift of clothes, the artificers began with all speed to work, so as to bring themselves into heat, while the writer and his assistants kept as much as possible in motion. Having remained more than an hour upon the rock, the boats left it at half-past nine; and, after getting on board, the writer recommended to the artificers, as the best mode of getting into a state of comfort, to strip off their wet clothes and go to bed for an hour or two. No further inconveniency was felt, and no one seemed to complain of the affection called "catching cold."

Friday, 18th Sept. An important occurrence connected with the operations of this season was the arrival of the *Smeaton* at four p.m., having in tow the six principal beams of the beacon-house, together with all the stanchions and other work on board for fixing it on the rock. The mooring of the floating light was a great point gained, but in the erection of the beacon at this late period of the season new difficulties presented themselves. The success of such an undertaking at any season was precarious, because a single day of bad weather occurring before the necessary fixtures could be made might sweep the whole apparatus from the rock. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the writer had determined to make the trial, although he could almost have wished, upon looking at the state of the clouds and the direction of the wind, that the apparatus for the beacon had been still in the workyard.

Saturday, 19th Sept. The main beams of the beacon were made up in two separate rafts, fixed with bars and bolts of iron. One of these rafts, not being immediately wanted, was left astern of the floating light, and the other was kept in tow by the *Smeaton*, at the buoy nearest to the rock. The Lighthouse yacht rode at another buoy with all hands on board

that could possibly be spared out of the floating light. The party of artificers and seamen which landed on the rock counted altogether forty in number. At half-past eight o'clock a derrick, or mast of thirty feet in height, was erected and properly supported with guy-ropes, for suspending the block for raising the first principal beam of the beacon; and a winch machine was also bolted down to the rock for working the purchase-tackle. 1807

Upon raising the derrick, all hands on the rock spontaneously gave three hearty cheers, as a favourable omen of our future exertions in pointing out more permanently the position of the rock. Even to this single spar of timber, could it be preserved, a drowning man might lay hold. When the *Smeaton* drifted on the 2nd of this month such a spar would have been sufficient to save us till she could have come to our relief.

The wind this morning was variable, but the weather continued extremely favourable for the operations throughout the whole day. At six a.m. the boats were in motion, and the raft, consisting of four of the six principal beams of the beacon-house, each measuring about sixteen inches square, and fifty feet in length, was towed to the rock, where it was anchored, that it might *ground* upon it as the water ebbed. The sailors and artificers, including all hands, to-day counted no fewer than fifty-two, being perhaps the greatest number of persons ever collected upon the Bell Rock. It was early in the tide when the boats reached the rock, and the men worked a considerable time up to their middle in water, every one being more eager than his neighbour to be useful. Even the four artificers who had hitherto declined working on Sunday were to-day most zealous in their exertions. They had indeed become so convinced of the precarious nature and necessity of the work that they never afterwards absented themselves from the rock on Sunday when a landing was practicable. Sunday, 20th Sept.

Having made fast a piece of very good new line, at about two-thirds from the lower end of one of the beams, the purchase-tackle of the derrick was hooked into the turns of the line, and it was speedily raised by the number of men on the rock and the power of the winch tackle. When this log was lifted to a sufficient height, its foot, or lower end, was *stepped* into the spot which had been previously prepared for it. Two of the great iron stanchions were then set in their respective holes on each side of the beam, when a rope was passed round them and the beam, to prevent it from slipping till it could be more permanently fixed. The derrick, or upright spar used for carrying the tackle to raise the first beam, was placed in such a position as to become useful for supporting the upper end

1807 of it, which now became, in its turn, the prop of the tackle for raising the second beam. The whole difficulty of this operation was in the raising and propping of the first beam, which became a convenient derrick for raising the second, these again a pair of shears for lifting the third, and the shears a triangle for raising the fourth. Having thus got four of the six principal beams set on end, it required a considerable degree of trouble to get their upper ends to fit. Here they formed the apex of a cone, and were all together mortised into a large piece of beechwood, and secured, for the present, with ropes, in a temporary manner. During the short period of one tide all that could further be done for their security was to put a single screw-bolt through the great kneed bats or stanchions on each side of the beams, and screw the nut home.

In this manner these four principal beams were erected, and left in a pretty secure state. The men had commenced while there was about two or three feet of water upon the side of the beacon, and as the sea was smooth they continued the work equally long during flood-tide. Two of the boats being left at the rock to take off the joiners, who were busily employed on the upper parts till two o'clock p.m., this tide's work may be said to have continued for about seven hours, which was the longest that had hitherto been got upon the rock by at least three hours.

When the first boats left the rock with the artificers employed on the lower part of the work during the flood-tide, the beacon had quite a novel appearance. The beams erected formed a common base of about thirty-three feet, meeting at the top, which was about forty-five feet above the rock, and here half a dozen of the artificers were still at work. After clearing the rock the boats made a stop, when three hearty cheers were given, which were returned with equal goodwill by those upon the beacon, from the personal interest which every one felt in the prosperity of this work, so intimately connected with his safety.

All hands having returned to their respective ships, they got a shift of dry clothes and some refreshment. Being Sunday, they were afterwards convened by signal on board of the Lighthouse yacht, when prayers were read; for every heart upon this occasion felt gladness, and every mind was disposed to be thankful for the happy and successful termination of the operations of this day.

Monday, 21st Sept. The remaining two principal beams were erected in the course of this tide, which, with the assistance of those set up yesterday, was found to be a very simple operation.

The six principal beams of the beacon were thus secured, at least in a temporary manner, in the course of two tides, or in the short

space of about eleven hours and a half. Such is the progress that may be made when active hands and willing minds set properly to work in operations of this kind. Having now got the weighty part of this work over, and being thereby relieved of the difficulty both of landing and victualling such a number of men, the *Smeaton* could now be spared, and she was accordingly despatched to Arbroath for a supply of water and provisions, and carried with her six of the artificers who could best be spared. 1807 Tuesday, 22nd Sept.

In going out of the eastern harbour, the boat which the writer steered shipped a sea, that filled her about one-third with water. She had also been hid for a short time, by the waves breaking upon the rock, from the sight of the crew of the preceding boat, who were much alarmed for our safety, imagining for a time that she had gone down. Wednesday, 23rd Sept.

The *Smeaton* returned from Arbroath this afternoon, but there was so much sea that she could not be made fast to her moorings, and the vessel was obliged to return to Arbroath without being able either to deliver the provisions or take the artificers on board. The Light-house yacht was also soon obliged to follow her example, as the sea was breaking heavily over her bows. After getting two reefs in the mainsail, and the third or storm-jib set, the wind being S.W., she bent to windward, though blowing a hard gale, and got into St. Andrews Bay, where we passed the night under the lee of Fifeness.

At two o'clock this morning we were in St. Andrews Bay, standing off and on shore, with strong gales of wind at S.W.; at seven we were off the entrance of the Tay; at eight stood towards the rock, and at ten passed to leeward of it, but could not attempt a landing. The beacon, however, appeared to remain in good order, and by six p.m. the vessel had again beaten up to St. Andrews Bay, and got into somewhat smoother water for the night. Thursday, 24th Sept.

At seven o'clock bore away for the Bell Rock, but finding a heavy sea running on it were unable to land. The writer, however, had the satisfaction to observe, with his telescope, that everything about the beacon appeared entire; and although the sea had a most frightful appearance, yet it was the opinion of every one that, since the erection of the beacon, the Bell Rock was divested of many of its terrors, and had it been possible to have got the boats hoisted out and manned, it might have even been found practicable to land. At six it blew so hard that it was found necessary to strike the topmast and take in a third reef of the mainsail, and under this low canvas we soon reached St. Andrews Bay, and got again under the lee of the land for the night. The artificers, being sea-hardy, were quite reconciled to their quarters on board of the Lighthouse yacht; but it is believed Friday, 25th Sept.

1807 that hardly any consideration would have induced them again to take up their abode in the floating light.

Saturday, 26th Sept. At daylight the yacht steered towards the Bell Rock, and at eight a.m. made fast to her moorings; at ten, all hands, to the amount of thirty, landed, when the writer had the happiness to find that the beacon had withstood the violence of the gale and the heavy breach of sea, everything being found in the same state in which it had been left on the 21st. The artificers were now enabled to work upon the rock throughout the whole day, both at low and high water, but it required the strictest attention to the state of the weather, in case of their being overtaken with a gale, which might prevent the possibility of getting them off the rock.

Two somewhat memorable circumstances in the annals of the Bell Rock attended the operations of this day: one was the removal of Mr. James Dove, the foreman smith, with his apparatus, from the rock to the upper part of the beacon, where the forge was now erected on a temporary platform, laid on the cross beams or upper framing. The other was the artificers having dined for the first time upon the rock, their dinner being cooked on board of the yacht, and sent to them by one of the boats. But what afforded the greatest happiness and relief was the removal of the large bellows, which had all along been a source of much trouble and perplexity, by their hampering and incommoding the boat which carried the smiths and their apparatus.

Saturday, 3rd Oct. The wind being west to-day, the weather was very favourable for operations at the rock, and during the morning and evening tides, with the aid of torchlight, the masons had seven hours' work upon the site of the building. The smiths and joiners, who landed at half-past six a.m., did not leave the rock till a quarter-past eleven p.m., having been at work, with little intermission, for sixteen hours and three-quarters. When the water left the rock, they were employed at the lower parts of the beacon, and as the tide rose or fell, they shifted the place of their operations. From these exertions, the fixing and securing of the beacon made rapid advancement, as the men were now landed in the morning, and remained throughout the day. But, as a sudden change of weather might have prevented their being taken off at the proper time of tide, a quantity of bread and water was always kept on the beacon.

During this period of working at the beacon all the day, and often a great part of the night, the writer was much on board of the tender; but, while the masons could work on the rock, and frequently also while it was covered by the tide, he remained on the beacon; especially during the night, as he made a point of being on the rock to the

latest hour, and was generally the last person who stepped into the boat. He had laid this down as part of his plan of procedure; and in this way had acquired, in the course of the first season, a pretty complete knowledge and experience of what could actually be done at the Bell Rock, under all circumstances of the weather. By this means also his assistants, and the artificers and mariners, got into a systematic habit of proceeding at the commencement of the work, which, it is believed, continued throughout the whole of the operations. 1807

The external part of the beacon was now finished, with its supports and bracing-chains, and whatever else was considered necessary for its stability, in so far as the season would permit; and although much was still wanting to complete this fabric, yet it was in such a state that it could be left without much fear of the consequences of a storm. The painting of the upper part was nearly finished this afternoon; and the *Smeaton* had brought off a quantity of brushwood and other articles, for the purpose of heating or charring the lower part of the principal beams, before being laid over with successive coats of boiling pitch, to the height of from eight to twelve feet, or as high as the rise of spring-tides. A small flagstaff having also been erected to-day, a flag was displayed for the first time from the beacon, by which its perspective effect was greatly improved. On this, as on all like occasions at the Bell Rock, three hearty cheers were given; and the steward served out a dram of rum to all hands, while the Lighthouse yacht, *Smeaton*, and floating light, hoisted their colours in compliment to the erection. Sunday, 4th Oct.

In the afternoon, and just as the tide's work was over, Mr. John Rennie, engineer, accompanied by his son Mr. George, on their way to the harbour works of Fraserburgh, in Aberdeenshire, paid a visit to the Bell Rock, in a boat from Arbroath. It being then too late in the tide for landing, they remained on board of the Lighthouse yacht all night, when the writer, who had now been secluded from society for several weeks, enjoyed much of Mr. Rennie's interesting conversation, both on general topics, and professionally upon the progress of the Bell Rock works, on which he was consulted as chief engineer. Monday, 5th Oct.

The artificers landed this morning at nine, after which one of the boats returned to the ship for the writer and Messrs. Rennie, who, upon landing, were saluted with a display of the colours from the beacon and by three cheers from the workmen. Everything was now in a prepared state for leaving the rock, and giving up the works afloat for this season, excepting some small articles, which would still occupy the smiths and joiners for a few days longer. They accord- Tuesday, 6th Oct.

1807 ingly shifted on board of the *Smeaton*, while the yacht left the rock for Arbroath, with Messrs. Rennie, the writer, and the remainder of the artificers. But, before taking leave, the steward served out a farewell glass, when three hearty cheers were given, and an earnest wish expressed that everything, in the spring of 1808, might be found in the same state of good order as it was now about to be left.

II

OPERATIONS OF 1808

1808 Monday, 29th Feb. The writer sailed from Arbroath at one a.m. in the Lighthouse yacht. At seven the floating light was hailed, and all on board found to be well. The crew were observed to have a very healthy-like appearance, and looked better than at the close of the works upon the rock. They seemed only to regret one thing, which was the secession of their cook, Thomas Elliot—not on account of his professional skill, but for his facetious and curious manner. Elliot had something peculiar in his history, and was reported by his comrades to have seen better days. He was, however, happy with his situation on board of the floating light, and having a taste for music, dancing, and acting plays, he contributed much to the amusement of the ship's company in their dreary abode during the winter months. He had also recommended himself to their notice as a good shipkeeper for as it did not answer Elliot to go often ashore, he had always given up his turn of leave to his neighbours. At his own desire he was at length paid off, when he had a considerable balance of wages to receive, which he said would be sufficient to carry him to the West Indies, and he accordingly took leave of the Lighthouse service.

Tuesday, 1st March. At daybreak the Lighthouse yacht, attended by a boat from the floating light, again stood towards the Bell Rock. The weather felt extremely cold this morning, the thermometer being at 34 degrees, with the wind at east, accompanied by occasional showers of snow, and the marine barometer indicated 29·80. At half-past seven the sea ran with such force upon the rock that it seemed doubtful if a landing could be effected. At half-past eight, when it was fairly above water, the writer took his place in the floating light's boat with the artificers, while the yacht's boat followed, according to the general rule of having two boats afloat in landing expeditions of this kind, that, in case of accident to one boat, the other might assist. In several unsuccessful attempts the boats were beat back by the breach of the sea upon the rock. On the eastern side it separated into two

distinct waves, which came with a sweep round to the western side; 1808
where they met; and at the instance of their confluence the water rose in spray to a considerable height. Watching what the sailors term a *smooth*, we caught a favourable opportunity, and in a very dexterous manner the boats were rowed between the two seas, and made a favourable landing at the western creek.

At the latter end of last season, as was formerly noticed, the beacon was painted white, and from the bleaching of the weather and the sprays of the sea the upper parts were kept clean; but within the range of the tide the principal beams were observed to be thickly coated with a green stuff, the *conferva* of botanists. Notwithstanding the intrusion of these works, which had formerly banished the numerous seals that played about the rock, they were now seen in great numbers, having been in an almost undisturbed state for six months. It had now also, for the first time, got some inhabitants of the feathered tribe: in particular the scarth or cormorant, and the large herring-gull, had made the beacon a resting-place, from its vicinity to their fishing-grounds. About a dozen of these birds had rested upon the cross-beams, which, in some places, were coated with their dung; and their flight, as the boats approached, was a very unlooked-for indication of life and habitation on the Bell Rock, conveying the momentary idea of the conversion of this fatal rock, from being a terror to the mariner, into a residence of man and a safeguard to shipping.

Upon narrowly examining the great iron stanchions with which the beams were fixed to the rock, the writer had the satisfaction of finding that there was not the least appearance of working or shifting at any of the joints or places of connection; and, excepting the loosening of the bracing-chains, everything was found in the same entire state in which it had been left in the month of October. This, in the estimation of the writer, was a matter of no small importance to the future success of the work. He from that moment saw the practicability and propriety of fitting up the beacon, not only as a place of refuge in case of accident to the boats in landing, but as a residence for the artificers during the working months.

While upon the top of the beacon the writer was reminded by the landing-master that the sea was running high, and that it would be necessary to set off while the rock afforded anything like shelter to the boats, which by this time had been made fast by a long line to the beacon, and rode with much agitation, each requiring two men with boat-hooks to keep them from striking each other, or from ranging up against the beacon. But even under these circumstances the greatest confidence was felt by every one, from the security

1808 afforded by this temporary erection. For, supposing the wind had suddenly increased to a gale, and that it had been found unadvisable to go into the boats ; or, supposing they had drifted or sprung a leak from striking upon the rocks ; in any of these possible and not at all improbable cases, those who might thus have been left upon the rock had now something to lay hold of, and, though occupying this dreary habitation of the sea-gull and the cormorant, affording only bread and water, yet *life* would be preserved, and the mind would still be supported by the hope of being ultimately relieved.

Wednesday, 25th May. On the 25th of May the writer embarked at Arbroath, on board of the *Sir Joseph Banks*, for the Bell Rock, accompanied by Mr. Logan senior, foreman builder, with twelve masons, and two smiths, together with thirteen seamen, including the master, mate, and steward.

Thursday, 26th May. Mr. James Wilson, now commander of the *Pharos*, floating light, and landing-master, in the room of Mr. Sinclair, who had left the service, came into the writer's cabin this morning at six o'clock, and intimated that there was a good appearance of landing on the rock. Everything being arranged, both boats proceeded in company, and at eight a.m. they reached the rock. The lighthouse colours were immediately hoisted upon the flag-staff of the beacon, a compliment which was duly returned by the tender and floating light, when three hearty cheers were given, and a glass of rum was served out to all hands to drink success to the operations of 1808.

Friday, 27th May. This morning the wind was at east, blowing a fresh gale, the weather being hazy, with a considerable breach of sea setting in upon the rock. The morning bell was therefore rung, in some doubt as to the practicability of making a landing. After allowing the rock to get fully up, or to be sufficiently left by the tide, that the boats might have some shelter from the range of the sea, they proceeded at eight a.m., and upon the whole made a pretty good landing ; and after two hours and three-quarters' work returned to the ship in safety.

In the afternoon the wind considerably increased, and, as a pretty heavy sea was still running, the tender rode very hard, when Mr. Taylor, the commander, found it necessary to take in the bowsprit, and strike the fore and main topmasts, that she might ride more easily. After consulting about the state of the weather, it was resolved to leave the artificers on board this evening, and carry only the smiths to the rock, as the sharpening of the irons was rather behind, from their being so much broken and blunted by the hard and tough nature of the rock, which became much more compact and hard as the depth of excavation was increased. Besides avoiding

the risk of encumbering the boats with a number of men who had not yet got the full command of the oar in a breach of sea, the writer had another motive for leaving them behind. He wanted to examine the site of the building without interruption, and to take the comparative levels of the different inequalities of its area ; and as it would have been painful to have seen men standing idle upon the Bell Rock, where all moved with activity, it was judged better to leave them on board. The boats landed at half-past seven p.m., and the landing-master, with the seamen, was employed during this tide in cutting the seaweeds from the several paths leading to the landing-places, to render walking more safe, for, from the slippery state of the surface of the rock, many severe tumbles had taken place. In the meantime the writer took the necessary levels, and having carefully examined the site of the building and considered all its parts, it still appeared to be necessary to excavate to the average depth of fourteen inches over the whole area of the foundation. 1808

The wind still continued from the eastward with a heavy swell ; and to-day it was accompanied with foggy weather and occasional showers of rain. Notwithstanding this, such was the confidence which the erection of the beacon had inspired that the boats landed the artificers on the rock under very unpromising circumstances, at half-past eight, and they continued at work till half-past eleven, being a period of three hours, which was considered a great tide's work in the present low state of the foundation. Three of the masons on board were so afflicted with sea-sickness that they had not been able to take any food for almost three days, and they were literally assisted into the boats this morning by their companions. It was, however, not a little surprising to see how speedily these men revived upon landing on the rock and eating a little dulse. Two of them afterwards assisted the sailors in collecting the chips of stone and carrying them out of the way of the pickmen ; but the third complained of a pain in his head, and was still unable to do anything. Instead of returning to the tender with the boats, these three men remained on the beacon all day, and had their victuals sent to them along with the smiths'. From Mr. Dove, the foreman smith, they had much sympathy, for he preferred remaining on the beacon at all hazards, to be himself relieved from the malady of sea-sickness. The wind continuing high, with a heavy sea, and the tide falling late, it was not judged proper to land the artificers this evening, but in the twilight the boats were sent to fetch the people on board who had been left on the rock. Saturday, 28th May.

The wind was from the S.W. to-day, and the signal-bell rung, as usual, about an hour before the period for landing on the rock. The Sunday, 29th May.

1808 writer was rather surprised, however, to hear the landing-master repeatedly call, " All hands for the rock ! " and, coming on deck, he was disappointed to find the seamen only in the boats. Upon inquiry, it appeared that some misunderstanding had taken place about the wages of the artificers for Sundays. They had preferred wages for seven days statedly to the former mode of allowing a day for each tide's work on Sunday, as they did not like the appearance of working for double or even treble wages on Sunday, and would rather have it understood that their work on that day arose more from the urgency of the case than with a view to emolument. This having been judged creditable to their religious feelings, and readily adjusted to their wish, the boats proceeded to the rock, and the work commenced at nine a.m.

Monday, 30th May. Mr. Francis Watt commenced, with five joiners, to fit up a temporary platform upon the beacon, about twenty-five feet above the highest part of the rock. This platform was to be used as the site of the smith's forge, after the beacon should be fitted up as a barrack ; and here also the mortar was to be mixed and prepared for the building, and it was accordingly termed the Mortar Gallery.

The landing-master's crew completed the discharging from the *Smeaton* of her cargo of the cast-iron rails and timber. It must not here be omitted to notice that the *Smeaton* took in ballast from the Bell Rock, consisting of the shivers or chips of stone produced by the workmen in preparing the site of the building, which were now accumulating in great quantities on the rock. These the boats loaded, after discharging the iron. The object in carrying off these chips, besides ballasting the vessel, was to get them permanently out of the way, as they were apt to shift about from place to place with every gale of wind ; and it often required a considerable time to clear the foundation a second time of this rubbish. The circumstance of ballasting a ship at the Bell Rock afforded great entertainment, especially to the sailors ; and it was perhaps with truth remarked that the *Smeaton* was the first vessel that had ever taken on board ballast at the Bell Rock. Mr. Pool, the commander of this vessel, afterwards acquainted the writer that, when the ballast was landed upon the quay at Leith, many persons carried away specimens of it, as part of a cargo from the Bell Rock ; when he added, that such was the interest excited, from the number of specimens carried away, that some of his friends suggested that he should have sent the whole to the Cross of Edinburgh, where each piece might have sold for a penny.

Tuesday, 31st May. In the evening the boats went to the rock, and brought the joiners and smiths, and their sickly companions, on board of the

tender. These also brought with them two baskets full of fish, which they had caught at high water from the beacon, reporting, at the same time, to their comrades, that the fish were swimming in such numbers over the rock at high-water that it was completely hid from their sight, and nothing seen but the movement of thousands of fish. They were almost exclusively of the species called the podlie, or young coal-fish. This discovery, made for the first time to-day by the workmen, was considered fortunate, as an additional circumstance likely to produce an inclination among the artificers to take up their residence in the beacon, when it came to be fitted up as a barrack. 1808

At three o'clock in the morning the ship's bell was rung as the signal for landing at the rock. When the landing was to be made before breakfast, it was customary to give each of the artificers and seamen a dram and a biscuit, and coffee was prepared by the steward for the cabins. Exactly at four o'clock the whole party landed from three boats, including one of those belonging to the floating light, with a part of that ship's crew, which always attended the works in moderate weather. The landing-master's boat, called the *Seaman*, but more commonly called the *Lifeboat*, took the lead. The next boat, called the *Mason*, was generally steered by the writer; while the floating light's boat, *Pharos*, was under the management of the boatswain of that ship. Tuesday, 7th June.

Having now so considerable a party of workmen and sailors on the rock, it may be proper here to notice how their labours were directed. Preparations having been made last month for the erection of a second forge upon the beacon, the smiths commenced their operations both upon the lower and higher platforms. They were employed in sharpening the picks and irons for the masons, and making bats and other apparatus of various descriptions connected with the fitting of the railways. The landing-master's crew were occupied in assisting the millwrights in laying the railways to hand. Sailors, of all other descriptions of men, are the most accommodating in the use of their hands. They worked freely with the boring-irons, and assisted in all the operations of the railways, acting by turns as boatmen, seamen, and artificers. We had no such character on the Bell Rock as the common labourer. All the operations of this department were cheerfully undertaken by the seamen, who, both on the rock and on shipboard, were the inseparable companions of every work connected with the erection of the Bell Rock Lighthouse. It will naturally be supposed that about twenty-five masons, occupied with their picks in executing and preparing the foundation of the lighthouse, in the course of a tide of about

1808 three hours, would make a considerable impression upon an area even of forty-two feet in diameter. But in proportion as the foundation was deepened, the rock was found to be much more hard and difficult to work, while the baling and pumping of water became much more troublesome. A joiner was kept almost constantly employed in fitting the picks to their handles, which, as well as the points to the irons, were very frequently broken.

The Bell Rock this morning presented by far the most busy and active appearance it had exhibited since the erection of the principal beams of the beacon. The surface of the rock was crowded with men, the two forges flaming, the one above the other, upon the beacon, while the anvils thundered with the rebounding noise of their wooden supports, and formed a curious contrast with the occasional clamour of the surges. The wind was westerly, and the weather being extremely agreeable, so soon after breakfast as the tide had sufficiently overflowed the rock to float the boats over it, the smiths, with a number of the artificers, returned to the beacon, carrying their fishing-tackle along with them. In the course of the forenoon, the beacon exhibited a still more extraordinary appearance than the rock had done in the morning. The sea being smooth, it seemed to be afloat upon the water, with a number of men supporting themselves in all the variety of attitude and position: while, from the upper part of this wooden house, the volumes of smoke which ascended from the forges gave the whole a very curious and fanciful appearance.

In the course of this tide it was observed that a heavy swell was setting in from the eastward, and the appearance of the sky indicated a change of weather, while the wind was shifting about. The barometer also had fallen from 30 in. to 29·6. It was, therefore, judged prudent to shift the vessel to the S.W. or more distant buoy. Her bowsprit was also soon afterwards taken in, the topmasts struck, and everything made *snug*, as seamen term it, for a gale. During the course of the night the wind increased and shifted to the eastward, when the vessel rolled very hard, and the sea often broke over her bows with great force.

Wednesday, 8th June. Although the motion of the tender was much less than that of the floating light—at least, in regard to the rolling motion—yet she *sended*, or pitched, much. Being also of a very handsome build, and what seamen term very *clean aft*, the sea often struck her counter with such force that the writer, who possessed the aftermost cabin, being unaccustomed to this new vessel, could not divest himself of uneasiness; for when her stern fell into the sea, it struck with so much violence as to be more like the resistance of a rock than the sea.

1808

The water, at the same time, often rushed with great force up the rudder-case, and, forcing up the valve of the water-closet, the floor of his cabin was at times laid under water. The gale continued to increase, and the vessel rolled and pitched in such a manner that the hawser by which the tender was made fast to the buoy snapped, and she went adrift. In the act of swinging round to the wind she shipped a very heavy sea, which greatly alarmed the artificers, who imagined that we had got upon the rock ; but this, from the direction of the wind, was impossible. The writer, however, sprung upon deck, where he found the sailors busily employed in rigging out the bowsprit and in setting sail. From the easterly direction of the wind, it was considered most advisable to steer for the Firth of Forth, and there wait a change of weather. At two p.m. we accordingly passed the Isle of May, at six anchored in Leith Roads, and at eight the writer landed, when he came in upon his friends, who were not a little surprised at his unexpected appearance, which gave an instantaneous alarm for the safety of things at the Bell Rock.

Thursday, 9th June.

The wind still continued to blow very hard at E. by N., and the *Sir Joseph Banks* rode heavily, and even drifted with both anchors ahead, in Leith Roads. The artificers did not attempt to leave the ship last night ; but there being upwards of fifty people on board, and the decks greatly lumbered with the two large boats, they were in a very crowded and impatient state on board. But to-day they got ashore, and amused themselves by walking about the streets of Edinburgh, some in very humble apparel, from having only the worst of their jackets with them, which, though quite suitable for their work, were hardly fit for public inspection, being not only tattered, but greatly stained with the red colour of the rock.

Friday, 10th June.

To-day the wind was at S.E., with light breezes and foggy weather. At six a.m. the writer again embarked for the Bell Rock, when the vessel immediately sailed. At eleven p.m., there being no wind, the kedge-anchor was *let go* off Anstruther, one of the numerous towns on the coast of Fife, where we waited the return of the tide.

Saturday, 11th June.

At six a.m. the *Sir Joseph* got under weigh, and at eleven was again made fast to the southern buoy at the Bell Rock. Though it was now late in the tide, the writer, being anxious to ascertain the state of things after the gale, landed with the artificers to the number of forty-four. Everything was found in an entire state ; but, as the tide was nearly gone, only half an hour's work had been got when the site of the building was overflowed. In the evening the boats again landed at nine, and, after a good tide's work of three hours with torchlight, the work was left off at midnight. To the distant shipping the appearance of things under night on the Bell Rock, when

1808 the work was going forward, must have been very remarkable, especially to those who were strangers to the operations. Mr. John Reid, principal lightkeeper, who also acted as master of the floating light during the working months at the rock, described the appearance of the numerous lights situated so low in the water, when seen at the distance of two or three miles, as putting him in mind of Milton's description of the fiends in the lower regions, adding, " for it seems greatly to surpass Will-o'-the-wisp, or any of those earthly spectres of which we have so often heard."

Monday, 13th June. From the difficulties attending the landing on the rock, owing to the breach of sea which had for days past been around it, the artificers showed some backwardness at getting into the boats this morning ; but after a little explanation this was got over. It was always observable that for some time after anything like danger had occurred at the rock, the workmen became much more cautious, and on some occasions their timidity was rather troublesome. It fortunately happened, however, that along with the writer's assistants and the sailors there were also some of the artificers themselves who felt no such scruples, and in this way these difficulties were the more easily surmounted. In matters where life is in danger it becomes necessary to treat even unfounded prejudices with tenderness, as an accident, under certain circumstances, would not only have been particularly painful to those giving directions, but have proved highly detrimental to the work, especially in the early stages of its advancement.

At four o'clock fifty-eight persons landed ; but the tides being extremely languid, the water only left the higher parts of the rock, and no work could be done at the site of the building. A third forge was, however, put in operation during a short time, for the greater conveniency of sharpening the picks and irons, and for purposes connected with the preparations for fixing the railways on the rock. The weather towards the evening became thick and foggy, and there was hardly a breath of wind to ruffle the surface of the water. Had it not, therefore, been for the noise from the anvils of the smiths who had been left on the beacon throughout the day, which afforded a guide for the boats, a landing could not have been attempted this evening, especially with such a company of artificers. This circumstance confirmed the writer's opinion with regard to the propriety of connecting large bells to be rung with machinery in the lighthouse, to be tolled day and night during the continuance of foggy weather.

Thursday, 23rd June. The boats landed this evening, when the artificers had again two hours' work. The weather still continuing very thick and foggy,

more difficulty was experienced in getting on board of the vessels to-night than had occurred on any previous occasion, owing to a light breeze of wind which carried the sound of the bell, and the other signals made on board of the vessels, away from the rock. Having fortunately made out the position of the sloop *Smeaton* at the N.E. buoy—to which we were much assisted by the barking of the ship's dog,—we parted with the *Smeaton's* boat, when the boats of the tender took a fresh departure for that vessel, which lay about half a mile to the south-westward. Yet such is the very deceiving state of the tides, that, although there was a small binnacle and compass in the landing-master's boat, we had, nevertheless, passed the *Sir Joseph* a good way, when, fortunately, one of the sailors catched the sound of a blowing-horn. The only firearms on board were a pair of swivels of one-inch calibre; but it is quite surprising how much the sound is lost in foggy weather, as the report was heard but at a very short distance. The sound from the explosion of gunpowder is so instantaneous that the effect of the small guns was not so good as either the blowing of a horn or the tolling of a bell, which afforded a more constant and steady direction for the pilot. 1808

Landed on the rock with the three boats belonging to the tender at five p.m., and began immediately to bale the water out of the foundation-pit with a number of buckets, while the pumps were also kept in action with relays of artificers and seamen. The work commenced upon the higher parts of the foundation as the water left them, but it was now pretty generally reduced to a level. About twenty men could be conveniently employed at each pump, and it is quite astonishing in how short a time so great a body of water could be drawn off. The water in the foundation-pit at this time measured about two feet in depth, on an area of forty-two feet in diameter, and yet it was drawn off in the course of about half an hour. After this the artificers commenced with their picks and continued at work for two hours and a half, some of the sailors being at the same time busily employed in clearing the foundation of chips and in conveying the irons to and from the smiths on the beacon, where they were sharped. At eight o'clock the sea broke in upon us and overflowed the foundation-pit, when the boats returned to the tender. Wednesday, 6th July,

The landing-master's bell rung this morning about four o'clock, and at half-past five, the foundation being cleared, the work commenced on the site of the building. But from the moment of landing, the squad of joiners and millwrights was at work upon the higher parts of the rock in laying the railways, while the anvils of the smith Thursday, 7th July.

1808 resounded on the beacon, and such columns of smoke ascended from the forges that they were often mistaken by strangers at a distance for a ship on fire. After continuing three hours at work the foundation of the building was again overflowed, and the boats returned to the ship at half-past eight o'clock. The masons and pickmen had, at this period, a pretty long day on board of the tender, but the smiths and joiners were kept constantly at work upon the beacon, the stability and great conveniency of which had now been so fully shown that no doubt remained as to the propriety of fitting it up as a barrack. The workmen were accordingly employed, during the period of high-water, in making preparations for this purpose.

The foundation-pit now assumed the appearance of a great platform, and the late tides had been so favourable that it became apparent that the first course, consisting of a few irregular and detached stones for making up certain inequalities in the interior parts of the site of the building, might be laid in the course of the present spring-tides. Having been enabled to-day to get the dimensions of the foundation, or first stone, accurately taken, a mould was made of its figure, when the writer left the rock, after the tide's work of this morning, in a fast rowing-boat for Arbroath ; and, upon landing, two men were immediately set to work upon one of the blocks from Mylnefield quarry, which was prepared in the course of the following day, as the stone-cutters relieved each other, and worked both night and day, so that it was sent off in one of the stone-lighters without delay.

Saturday, 9th July. The site of the foundation-stone was very difficult to work, from its depth in the rock ; but being now nearly prepared, it formed a very agreeable kind of pastime at high-water for all hands to land the stone itself upon the rock. The landing-master's crew and artificers accordingly entered with great spirit into this operation. The stone was placed upon the deck of the *Hedderwick* praam-boat, which had just been brought from Leith, and was decorated with colours for the occasion. Flags were also displayed from the shipping in the offing, and upon the beacon. Here the writer took his station with the greater part of the artificers, who supported themselves in every possible position while the boats towed the praam from her moorings and brought her immediately over the site of the building, where her grappling anchors were let go. The stone was then lifted off the deck by a tackle hooked into a Lewis bat inserted into it, when it was gently lowered into the water and grounded on the site of the building, amidst the cheering acclamations of about sixty persons.

Sunday, 10th July. At eleven o'clock the foundation-stone was laid to hand. It was of a square form, containing about twenty cubic feet, and had the

figures, or date, of 1808 simply cut upon it with a chisel. A derrick, or spar of timber, having been erected at the edge of the hole and guyed with ropes, the stone was then hooked to the tackle and lowered into its place, when the writer, attended by his assistants—Mr. Peter Logan, Mr. Francis Watt, and Mr. James Wilson,—applied the square, the level, and the mallet, and pronounced the following benediction: "May the Great Architect of the Universe complete and bless this building," on which three hearty cheers were given, and success to the future operations was drunk with the greatest enthusiasm. 1808

The wind being at S.E. this evening, we had a pretty heavy swell of sea upon the rock, and some difficulty attended our getting off in safety, as the boats got aground in the creek and were in danger of being upset. Upon extinguishing the torch-lights, about twelve in number, the darkness of the night seemed quite horrible; the water being also much charged with the phosphorescent appearance which is familiar to every one on shipboard, the waves, as they dashed upon the rock, were in some degree like so much liquid flame. The scene, upon the whole, was truly awful! Tuesday, 26th July.

In leaving the rock this evening everything, after the torches were extinguished, had the same dismal appearance as last night, but so perfectly acquainted were the landing-master and his crew with the position of things at the rock, that comparatively little inconveniency was experienced on these occasions when the weather was moderate; such is the effect of habit, even in the most unpleasant situations. If, for example, it had been proposed to a person accustomed to a city life, at once to take up his quarters off a sunken reef and land upon it in boats at all hours of the night, the proposition must have appeared quite impracticable and extravagant; but this practice coming progressively upon the artificers, it was ultimately undertaken with the greatest alacrity. Notwithstanding this, however, it must be acknowledged that it was not till after much labour and peril, and many an anxious hour, that the writer is enabled to state that the site of the Bell Rock Lighthouse is fully prepared for the first entire course of the building. Wednesday, 27th July.

The artificers landed this morning at half-past ten, and after an hour and a half's work eight stones were laid, which completed the first entire course of the building, consisting of 123 blocks, the last of which was laid with three hearty cheers. Friday, 12th Aug.

Landed at nine a.m., and by a quarter-past twelve noon twenty-three stones had been laid. The works being now somewhat elevated by the lower courses, we got quit of the very serious inconvenience of pumping water to clear the foundation-pit. This gave much facility Saturday, 10th Sept.

1808 to the operations, and was noticed with expressions of as much happiness by the artificers as the seamen had shown when relieved of the continual trouble of carrying the smith's bellows off the rock prior to the erection of the beacon.

Wednesday, 21st Sept. Mr. Thomas Macurich, mate of the *Smeaton*, and James Scott, one of the crew, a young man about eighteen years of age, immediately went into their boat to make fast a hawser to the ring in the top of the floating buoy of the moorings, and were forthwith to proceed to land their cargo, so much wanted, at the rock. The tides at this period were very strong, and the mooring-chain, when sweeping the ground, had caught hold of a rock or piece of wreck by which the chain was so shortened that when the tide flowed the buoy got almost under water, and little more than the ring appeared at the surface. When Macurich and Scott were in the act of making the hawser fast to the ring, the chain got suddenly disentangled at the bottom, and this large buoy, measuring about seven feet in height and three feet in diameter at the middle, tapering to both ends, being what seamen term a *Nun-buoy*, vaulted or sprung up with such force that it upset the boat, which instantly filled with water. Mr. Macurich, with much exertion, succeeded in getting hold of the boat's gunwale, still above the surface of the water, and by this means was saved; but the young man Scott was unfortunately drowned. He had in all probability been struck about the head by the ring of the buoy, for although surrounded with the oars and the thwarts of the boat which floated near him, yet he seemed entirely to want the power of availing himself of such assistance, and appeared to be quite insensible, while Pool, the master of the *Smeaton*, called loudly to him; and before assistance could be got from the tender, he was carried away by the strength of the current and disappeared.

The young man Scott was a great favourite in the service, having had something uncommonly mild and complaisant in his manner; and his loss was therefore universally regretted. The circumstances of his case were also peculiarly distressing to his mother, as her husband, who was a seaman, had for three years past been confined to a French prison, and the deceased was the chief support of the family. In order in some measure to make up the loss to the poor woman for the monthly aliment regularly allowed her by her late son, it was suggested that a younger boy, a brother of the deceased, might be taken into the service. This appeared to be rather a delicate proposition, but it was left to the landing-master to arrange according to circumstances; such was the resignation, and at the same time the spirit, of the poor woman, that she readily accepted

the proposal, and in a few days the younger Scott was actually afloat in the place of his brother. On representing this distressing case to the Board, the Commissioners were pleased to grant an annuity of £5 to Scott's mother. 1808

The *Smeaton*, not having been made fast to the buoy, had, with the ebb-tide, drifted to leeward a considerable way eastward of the rock, and could not, till the return of the flood-tide, be worked up to her moorings, so that the present tide was lost, notwithstanding all exertions which had been made both ashore and afloat with this cargo. The artificers landed at six a.m. ; but, as no materials could be got upon the rock this morning, they were employed in boring trenail holes and in various other operations, and after four hours' work they returned on board the tender. When the *Smeaton* got up to her moorings, the landing-master's crew immediately began to unload her. There being too much wind for towing the praams in the usual way, they were warped to the rock in the most laborious manner by their windlasses, with successive grapplings and hawsers laid out for this purpose. At six p.m. the artificers landed, and continued at work till half-past ten, when the remaining seventeen stones were laid which completed the third entire course, or fourth of the lighthouse, with which the building operations were closed for the season.

III

OPERATIONS OF 1809

The last night was the first that the writer had passed in his old quarters on board of the floating light for about twelve months, when the weather was so fine and the sea so smooth that even here he felt but little or no motion, excepting at the turn of the tide, when the vessel gets into what the seamen term the *trough of the sea*. At six a.m. Mr. Watt, who conducted the operations of the railways and beacon-house, had landed with nine artificers. At half-past one p.m. Mr. Peter Logan had also landed with fifteen masons, and immediately proceeded to set up the crane. The sheer-crane or apparatus for lifting the stones out of the praam-boats at the eastern creek had been already erected, and the railways now formed about two-thirds of an entire circle round the building : some progress had likewise been made with the reach towards the western landing-place. The floors being laid, the beacon now assumed the appearance of a habitation. The *Smeaton* was at her moorings, with the *Fernie* praam-boat astern, for which she was laying down moorings, and the 1809 Wednesday, 24th May.

1809 tender being also at her station, the Bell Rock had again put on its former busy aspect.

Wednesday, 31st May. The landing-master's bell, often no very favourite sound, rung at six this morning; but on this occasion, it is believed, it was gladly received by all on board, as the welcome signal of the return of better weather. The masons laid thirteen stones to-day, which the seamen had landed, together with other building materials. During these twenty-four hours the wind was from the south, blowing fresh breezes, accompanied with showers of snow. In the morning the snow showers were so thick that it was with difficulty the landing-master, who always steered the leading boat, could make his way to the rock through the drift. But at the Bell Rock neither snow nor rain, nor fog nor wind, retarded the progress of the work, if unaccompanied by a heavy swell or breach of the sea.

The weather during the months of April and May had been uncommonly boisterous, and so cold that the thermometer seldom exceeded 40°, while the barometer was generally about 29·50. We had not only hail and sleet, but the snow on the last day of May lay on the decks and rigging of the ship to the depth of about three inches; and, although now entering upon the month of June, the length of the day was the chief indication of summer. Yet such is the effect of habit, and such was the expertness of the landing-master's crew, that, even in this description of weather, seldom a tide's work was lost. Such was the ardour and zeal of the heads of the several departments at the rock, including Mr. Peter Logan, foreman builder, Mr. Francis Watt, foreman millwright, and Captain Wilson, landing-master, that it was on no occasion necessary to address them, excepting in the way of precaution or restraint. Under these circumstances, however, the writer not unfrequently felt considerable anxiety, of which this day's experience will afford an example.

Thursday, 1st June. This morning, at a quarter-past eight, the artificers were landed as usual, and, after three hours and three-quarters' work, five stones were laid, the greater part of this tide having been taken up in completing the boring and trenailing of the stones formerly laid. At noon the writer, with the seamen and artificers, proceeded to the tender, leaving on the beacon the joiners, and several of those who were troubled with sea-sickness—among whom was Mr. Logan, who remained with Mr. Watt—counting altogether eleven persons. During the first and middle parts of these twenty-four hours the wind was from the east, blowing what the seamen term "fresh breezes"; but in the afternoon it shifted to E.N.E., accompanied with so heavy a swell of sea that the *Smeaton* and tender struck their topmasts, launched in their bolt-sprits, and "made all snug" for

a gale. At four p.m. the *Smeaton* was obliged to slip her moorings, and passed the tender, drifting before the wind, with only the foresail set. In passing, Mr. Pool hailed that he must run for the Firth of Forth to prevent the vessel from "riding under." 1809

On board of the tender the writer's chief concern was about the eleven men left upon the beacon. Directions were accordingly given that everything about the vessel should be put in the best possible state, to present as little resistance to the wind as possible, that she might have the better chance of riding out the gale. Among these preparations the best bower cable was bent, so as to have a second anchor in readiness in case the mooring-hawser should give way, that every means might be used for keeping the vessel within sight of the prisoners on the beacon, and thereby keep them in as good spirits as possible. From the same motive the boats were kept afloat that they might be less in fear of the vessel leaving her station. The landing-master had, however, repeatedly expressed his anxiety for the safety of the boats, and wished much to have them hoisted on board. At seven p.m. one of the boats, as he feared, was unluckily filled with sea from a wave breaking into her, and it was with great difficulty that she could be baled out and got on board, with the loss of her oars, rudder, and loose thwarts. Such was the motion of the ship that in taking this boat on board her gunwale was stove in, and she otherwise received considerable damage. Night approached, but it was still found quite impossible to go near the rock. Consulting, therefore, the safety of the second boat, she also was hoisted on board of the tender.

At this time the cabins of the beacon were only partially covered, and had neither been provided with bedding nor a proper fireplace, while the stock of provisions was but slender. In these uncomfortable circumstances the people on the beacon were left for the night, nor was the situation of those on board of the tender much better. The rolling and pitching motion of the ship was excessive; and, excepting to those who had been accustomed to a residence in the floating light, it seemed quite intolerable. Nothing was heard but the hissing of the winds and the creaking of the bulkheads or partitions of the ship; the night was, therefore, spent in the most unpleasant reflections upon the condition of the people on the beacon, especially in the prospect of the tender being driven from her moorings. But, even in such a case, it afforded some consolation that the stability of the fabric was never doubted, and that the boats of the floating light were at no great distance, and ready to render the people on the rock the earliest assistance which the weather would permit. The writer's cabin being in the sternmost part of the ship,

1809 which had what sailors term a good entry, or was sharp built, the sea, as before noticed, struck her counter with so much violence that the water, with a rushing noise, continually forced its way up the rudder-case, lifted the valve of the water-closet, and overran the cabin floor. In these circumstances daylight was eagerly looked for, and hailed with delight, as well by those afloat as by the artificers upon the rock.

Friday, 2nd June. In the course of the night the writer held repeated conversations with the officer on watch, who reported that the weather continued much in the same state, and that the barometer still indicated 29·20 inches. At six a.m. the landing-master considered the weather to have somewhat moderated; and, from certain appearances of the sky, he was of opinion that a change for the better would soon take place. He accordingly proposed to attempt a landing at low-water, and either get the people off the rock, or at least ascertain what state they were in. At nine a.m. he left the vessel with a boat well manned, carrying with him a supply of cooked provisions and a tea-kettle full of mulled port wine for the people on the beacon, who had not had any regular diet for about thirty hours, while they were exposed during that period, in a great measure, both to the winds and the sprays of the sea. The boat having succeeded in landing, she returned at eleven a.m. with the artificers, who had got off with considerable difficulty, and who were heartily welcomed by all on board.

Upon inquiry it appeared that three of the stones last laid upon the building had been partially lifted from their beds by the force of the sea, and were now held only by the trenails, and that the cast-iron sheer-crane had again been thrown down and completely broken. With regard to the beacon, the sea at high-water had lifted part of the mortar gallery or lowest floor, and washed away all the lime-casks and other movable articles from it; but the principal parts of this fabric had sustained no damage. On pressing Messrs. Logan and Watt on the situation of things in the course of the night, Mr. Logan emphatically said: "That the beacon had an *ill-faured*[1] *twist* when the sea broke upon it at high-water, but that they were not very apprehensive of danger." On inquiring as to how they spent the night, it appeared that they had made shift to keep a small fire burning, and by means of some old sails defended themselves pretty well from the sea sprays.

It was particularly mentioned that by the exertions of James Glen, one of the joiners, a number of articles were saved from being washed off the mortar gallery. Glen was also very useful in keeping

[1] Ill-formed—ugly.—[R. L. S.]

up the spirits of the forlorn party. In the early part of life he had undergone many curious adventures at sea, which he now recounted somewhat after the manner of the tales of the "Arabian Nights." When one observed that the beacon was a most comfortless lodging, Glen would presently introduce some of his exploits and hardships, in comparison with which the state of things at the beacon bore an aspect of comfort and happiness. Looking to their slender stock of provisions, and their perilous and uncertain chance of speedy relief, he would launch out into an account of one of his expeditions in the North Sea, when the vessel, being much disabled in a storm, was driven before the wind with the loss of almost all their provisions; and the ship being much infested with rats, the crew hunted these vermin with great eagerness to help their scanty allowance. By such means Glen had the address to make his companions, in some measure, satisfied, or at least passive, with regard to their miserable prospects upon this half-tide rock in the middle of the ocean. This incident is noticed, more particularly, to show the effects of such a happy turn of mind, even under the most distressing and ill-fated circumstances. 1809

At eight a.m. the artificers and sailors, forty-five in number, landed on the rock, and after four hours' work seven stones were laid. The remainder of this tide, from the threatening appearance of the weather, was occupied in trenailing and making all things as secure as possible. At twelve noon the rock and building were again overflowed, when the masons and seamen went on board of the tender, but Mr. Watt, with his squad of ten men, remained on the beacon throughout the day. As it blew fresh from the N.W. in the evening, it was found impracticable either to land the building artificers or to take the artificers off the beacon, and they were accordingly left there all night, but in circumstances very different from those of the 1st of this month. The house, being now in a more complete state, was provided with bedding, and they spent the night pretty well, though they complained of having been much disturbed at the time of high-water by the shaking and tremulous motion of their house and by the plashing noise of the sea upon the mortar gallery. Here James Glen's versatile powers were again at work in cheering up those who seemed to be alarmed, and in securing everything as far as possible. On this occasion he had only to recall to the recollections of some of them the former night which they had spent on the beacon, the wind and sea being then much higher, and their habitation in a far less comfortable state. Saturday, 17th June.

The wind still continuing to blow fresh from the N.W., at five p.m. the writer caused a signal to be made from the tender for the

1809 *Smeaton* and *Patriot* to slip their moorings, when they ran for Lunan Bay, an anchorage on the east side of the Redhead. Those on board of the tender spent but a very rough night, and perhaps slept less soundly than their companions on the beacon, especially as the wind was at N.W., which caused the vessel to ride with her stern towards the Bell Rock; so that, in the event of anything giving way, she could hardly have escaped being stranded upon it.

Sunday, 18th June. The weather having moderated to-day, the wind shifted to the westward. At a quarter-past nine a.m. the artificers landed from the tender and had the pleasure to find their friends who had been left on the rock quite hearty, alleging that the beacon was the preferable quarters of the two.

[Saturday, 24th June. Mr. Peter Logan, the foreman builder, and his squad, twenty-one in number, landed this morning at three o'clock, and continued at work four hours and a quarter, and after laying seventeen stones returned to the tender. At six a.m. Mr. Francis Watt and his squad of twelve men landed, and proceeded with their respective operations at the beacon and railways, and were left on the rock during the whole day without the necessity of having any communication with the tender, the kitchen of the beacon-house being now fitted up. It was to-day, also, that Peter Fortune—a most obliging and well-known character in the Lighthouse service—was removed from the tender to the beacon as cook and steward, with a stock of provisions as ample as his limited storeroom would admit.

When as many stones were built as comprised this day's work, the demand for mortar was proportionally increased, and the task of the mortar-makers on these occasions was both laborious and severe. This operation was chiefly performed by John Watt—a strong, active quarrier by profession,—who was a perfect character in his way, and extremely zealous in his department. While the operations of the mortar-makers continued, the forge upon their gallery was not generally in use; but, as the working hours of the builders extended with the height of the building, the forge could not be so long wanted, and then a sad confusion often ensued upon the circumscribed floor of the mortar gallery, as the operations of Watt and his assistants trenched greatly upon those of the smiths. Under these circumstances the boundary of the smiths was much circumscribed, and they were personally annoyed, especially in blowy weather, with the dust of the lime in its powdered state. The mortar-makers, on the other hand, were often not a little distressed with the heat of the fire and the sparks elicited on the anvil, and not unaptly complained that they were placed between "the devil and the deep sea."

1809 Sunday, 25th June.

The work being now about ten feet in height, admitted of a rope-ladder being distended [1] between the beacon and the building. By this "Jacob's Ladder," as the seamen termed it, a communication was kept up with the beacon while the rock was considerably under water. One end of it being furnished with tackle-blocks, was fixed to the beams of the beacon, at the level of the mortar gallery, while the further end was connected with the upper course of the building by means of two Lewis bats which were lifted from course to course as the work advanced. In the same manner a rope furnished with a travelling pulley was distended for the purpose of transporting the mortar-buckets, and other light articles between the beacon and the building, which also proved a great conveniency to the work. At this period the rope-ladder and tackle for the mortar had a descent from the beacon to the building; by and by they were on a level, and towards the end of the season, when the solid part had attained its full height, the ascent was from the mortar gallery to the building.

Friday, 30th June.

The artificers landed on the rock this morning at a quarter-past six, and remained at work five hours. The cooking apparatus being now in full operation, all hands had breakfast on the beacon at the usual hour, and remained there throughout the day. The crane upon the building had to be raised to-day from the eighth to the ninth course, an operation which now required all the strength that could be mustered for working the guy-tackles; for as the top of the crane was at this time about thirty-five feet above the rock, it became much more unmanageable. While the beam was in the act of swinging round from one guy to another, a great strain was suddenly brought upon the opposite tackle, with the end of which the artificers had very improperly neglected to take a turn round some stationary object, which would have given them the complete command of the tackle. Owing to this simple omission, the crane got a preponderancy to one side, and fell upon the building with a terrible crash. The surrounding artificers immediately flew in every direction to get out of its way; but Michael Wishart, the principal builder, having unluckily stumbled upon one of the uncut trenails, fell upon his back. His body fortunately got between the movable beam and the upright shaft of the crane, and was thus saved; but his feet got entangled with the wheels of the crane and were severely injured. Wishart, being a robust young man, endured his misfortune with wonderful firmness; he was laid upon one of the narrow framed beds of the beacon and despatched in a boat to the tender, where the writer was when this accident happened, not a little alarmed on

[1] This is an incurable illusion of my grandfather's; he always writes "distended" for "extended." [R. L. S.]

1809 missing the crane from the top of the building, and at the same time seeing a boat rowing towards the vessel with great speed. When the boat came alongside with poor Wishart, stretched upon a bed covered with blankets, a moment of great anxiety followed, which was, however, much relieved when, on stepping into the boat, he was accosted by Wishart, though in a feeble voice, and with an aspect pale as death from excessive bleeding. Directions having been immediately given to the coxswain to apply to Mr. Kennedy at the workyard to procure the best surgical aid, the boat was sent off without delay to Arbroath. The writer then landed at the rock, when the crane was in a very short time got into its place and again put in a working state.

Monday, 3rd July. The writer having come to Arbroath with the yacht, had an opportunity of visiting Michael Wishart, the artificer who had met with so severe an accident at the rock on the 30th ult., and had the pleasure to find him in a state of recovery. From Dr. Stevenson's account, under whose charge he had been placed, hopes were entertained that amputation would not be necessary, as his patient still kept free of fever or any appearance of mortification ; and Wishart expressed a hope that he might, at least, be ultimately capable of keeping the light at the Bell Rock, as it was not now likely that he would assist further in building the house.

Saturday, 8th July. It was remarked to-day, with no small demonstration of joy, that the tide, being neap, did not, for the first time, overflow the building at high-water. Flags were accordingly hoisted on the beacon-house and crane on the top of the building, which were repeated from the floating light, Lighthouse yacht, tender, *Smeaton*, *Patriot*, and the two praams. A salute of three guns was also fired from the yacht at high-water, when, all the artificers being collected on the top of the building, three cheers were given in testimony of this important circumstance. A glass of rum was then served out to all hands on the rock and on board of the respective ships.

Sunday, 16th July. Besides laying, boring, trenailing, wedging, and grouting thirty-two stones, several other operations were proceeded with on the rock at low-water, when some of the artificers were employed at the railways and at high-water at the beacon-house. The seamen having prepared a quantity of tarpaulin or cloth laid over with successive coats of hot tar, the joiners had just completed the covering of the roof with it. This sort of covering was lighter and more easily managed than sheet-lead in such a situation. As a further defence against the weather the whole exterior of this temporary residence was painted with three coats of white-lead paint. Between the timber framing of the habitable part of the beacon the interstices

were to be stuffed with moss as a light substance that would resist dampness and check sifting winds; the whole interior was then to be lined with green baize cloth, so that both without and within the cabins were to have a very comfortable appearance. 1809

Although the building artificers generally remained on the rock throughout the day, and the millwrights, joiners, and smiths, while their number was considerable, remained also during the night, yet the tender had hitherto been considered as their night quarters. But the wind having in the course of the day shifted to the N.W., and as the passage to the tender, in the boats, was likely to be attended with difficulty, the whole of the artificers, with Mr. Logan, the foreman, preferred remaining all night on the beacon, which had of late become the solitary abode of George Forsyth, a jobbing upholsterer, who had been employed in lining the beacon-house with cloth and in fitting up the bedding. Forsyth was a tall, thin, and rather loose-made man, who had an utter aversion at climbing upon the trap-ladders of the beacon, but especially at the process of boating, and the motion of the ship, which he said "was death itself." He therefore pertinaciously insisted with the landing-master in being left upon the beacon, with a small black dog as his only companion. The writer, however, felt some delicacy in leaving a single individual upon the rock, who must have been so very helpless in case of accident. This fabric had, from the beginning, been rather intended by the writer to guard against accident from the loss or damage of a boat, and as a place for making mortar, a smith's shop, and a store for tools during the working months, than as permanent quarters; nor was it at all meant to be possessed until the joiner-work was completely finished, and his own cabin, and that for the foreman, in readiness, when it was still to be left to the choice of the artificers to occupy the tender or the beacon. He, however, considered Forsyth's partiality and confidence in the latter as rather a fortunate occurrence.

The whole of the artificers, twenty-three in number, now removed of their own accord from the tender, to lodge in the beacon, together with Peter Fortune, a person singularly adapted for a residence of this kind, both from the urbanity of his manners and the versatility of his talents. Fortune, in his person, was of small stature, and rather corpulent. Besides being a good Scots cook, he had acted both as groom and house-servant; he had been a soldier, a sutler, a writer's clerk, and an apothecary, from which he possessed the art of writing and suggesting recipes, and had hence, also, perhaps, acquired a turn for making collections in natural history. But in his practice in surgery on the Bell Rock, for which he received an Wednesday, 19th July.

1809 annual fee of three guineas, he is supposed to have been rather partial to the use of the lancet. In short, Peter was the *factotum* of the beacon-house, where he ostensibly acted in the several capacities of cook, steward, surgeon, and barber, and kept a statement of the rations or expenditure of the provisions with the strictest integrity.

In the present important state of the building, when it had just attained the height of sixteen feet, and the upper courses, and especially the imperfect one, were in the wash of the heaviest seas, an express boat arrived at the rock with a letter from Mr. Kennedy, of the workyard, stating that in consequence of the intended expedition to Walcheren, an embargo had been laid on shipping at all the ports of Great Britain : that both the *Smeaton* and *Patriot* were detained at Arbroath, and that but for the proper view which Mr. Ramsey, the port officer, had taken of his orders, neither the express boat nor one which had been sent with provisions and necessaries for the floating light would have been permitted to leave the harbour. The writer set off without delay for Arbroath, and on landing used every possible means with the official people, but their orders were deemed so peremptory that even boats were not permitted to sail from any port upon the coast. In the meantime, the collector of the Customs at Montrose applied to the Board at Edinburgh, but could, of himself, grant no relief to the Bell Rock shipping.

At this critical period Mr. Adam Duff, then Sheriff of Forfarshire, now of the county of Edinburgh, and *ex officio* one of the Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouses, happened to be at Arbroath. Mr. Duff took an immediate interest in representing the circumstances of the case to the Board of Customs at Edinburgh. But such were the doubts entertained on the subject that, on having previously received the appeal from the collector at Montrose, the case had been submitted to the consideration of the Lords of the Treasury, whose decision was now waited for.

In this state of things the writer felt particularly desirous to get the thirteenth course finished, that the building might be in a more secure state in the event of bad weather. An opportunity was therefore embraced on the 25th, in sailing with provisions for the floating light, to carry the necessary stones to the rock for this purpose, which were landed and built on the 26th and 27th. But so closely was the watch kept up that a Custom-house officer was always placed on board of the *Smeaton* and *Patriot* while they were afloat, till the embargo was especially removed from the lighthouse vessels. The artificers at the Bell Rock had been reduced to fifteen, who were regularly supplied with provisions, along with the crew of the floating

light, mainly through the port officer's liberal interpretation of his orders. 1809

There being a considerable swell and breach of sea upon the rock yesterday, the stones could not be got landed till the day following, when the wind shifted to the southward and the weather improved. But to-day no less than seventy-eight blocks of stone were landed, of which forty were built, which completed the fourteenth and part of the fifteenth courses. The number of workmen now resident in the beacon-house were augmented to twenty-four, including the landing-master's crew from the tender and the boat's crew from the floating light, who assisted at landing the stones. Those daily at work upon the rock at this period amounted to forty-six. A cabin had been laid out for the writer on the beacon, but his apartment had been the last which was finished, and he had not yet taken possession of it; for though he generally spent the greater part of the day, at this time, upon the rock, yet he always slept on board of the tender. Tuesday, 1st Aug.

The wind was at S.E. on the 11th, and there was so very heavy a swell of sea upon the rock that no boat could approach it. Friday, 11th Aug.

The gale still continuing from the S.E., the sea broke with great violence both upon the building and the beacon. The former being twenty-three feet in height, the upper part of the crane erected on it having been lifted from course to course as the building advanced, was now about thirty-six feet above the rock. From observations made on the rise of the sea by this crane, the artificers were enabled to estimate its height to be about fifty feet above the rock, while the sprays fell with a most alarming noise upon their cabins. At low-water, in the evening, a signal was made from the beacon, at the earnest desire of some of the artificers, for the boats to come to the rock; and although this could not be effected without considerable hazard, it was, however, accomplished, when twelve of their number, being much afraid, applied to the foreman to be relieved, and went on board of the tender. But the remaining fourteen continued on the rock, with Mr. Peter Logan, the foreman builder. Although this rule of allowing an option to every man either to remain on the rock or return to the tender was strictly adhered to, yet, as it would have been extremely inconvenient to have had the men parcelled out in this manner, it became necessary to embrace the first opportunity of sending those who had left the beacon to the workyard, with as little appearance of intention as possible, lest it should hurt their feelings, or prevent others from acting according to their wishes, either in landing on the rock or remaining on the beacon. Saturday, 12th Aug.

The wind had fortunately shifted to the S.W. this morning, and though a considerable breach was still upon the rock, yet the landing- Tuesday, 15th Aug.

1809 master's crew were enabled to get one praam-boat, lightly loaded with five stones, brought in safety to the western creek ; these stones were immediately laid by the artificers, who gladly embraced the return of good weather to proceed with their operations. The writer had this day taken possession of his cabin in the beacon-house. It was small, but commodious, and was found particularly convenient in coarse and blowing weather, instead of being obliged to make a passage to the tender in an open boat at all times, both during the day and the night, which was often attended with much difficulty and danger.

Saturday, 19th Aug. For some days past the weather had been occasionally so thick and foggy that no small difficulty was experienced in going even between the rock and the tender, though quite at hand. But the floating light's boat lost her way so far in returning on board that the first land she made, after rowing all night, was Fifeness, a distance of about fourteen miles. The weather having cleared in the morning, the crew stood off again for the floating light, and got on board in a half-famished and much exhausted state, having been constantly rowing for about sixteen hours.

Sunday, 20th Aug. The weather being very favourable to-day, fifty-three stones were landed, and the builders were not a little gratified in having built the twenty-second course, consisting of fifty-one stones, being the first course which had been completed in one day. This, as a matter of course, produced three hearty cheers. At twelve noon prayers were read for the first time on the Bell Rock; those present, counting thirty, were crowded into the upper apartment of the beacon, where the writer took a central position, while two of the artificers, joining hands, supported the Bible.

Friday, 25th Aug. To-day the artificers laid forty-five stones, which completed the twenty-fourth course, reckoning above the first entire one, and the twenty-sixth above the rock. This finished the solid part of the building, and terminated the height of the outward casing of granite, which is thirty-one feet six inches above the rock or site of the foundation-stone, and about seventeen feet above high water of spring-tides. Being a particular crisis in the progress of the light-house, the landing and laying of the last stone for the season was observed with the usual ceremonies.

From observations often made by the writer, in so far as such can be ascertained, it appears that no wave in the open seas, in an unbroken state, rises more than from seven to nine feet above the general surface of the ocean. The Bell Rock Lighthouse may therefore now be considered at from eight to ten feet above the height of the waves ; and, although the sprays and heavy seas have often been

observed, in the present state of the building, to rise to the height of fifty feet, and fall with a tremendous noise on the beacon-house, yet such seas were not likely to make any impression on a mass of solid masonry, containing about 1400 tons. 1809

The whole of the artificers left the rock at mid-day, when the tender made sail for Arbroath, which she reached about six p.m. The vessel being decorated with colours, and having fired a salute of three guns on approaching the harbour, the workyard artificers, with a multitude of people, assembled at the harbour, when mutual cheering and congratulations took place between those afloat and those on the quays. The tender had now, with little exception, been six months on the station at the Bell Rock, and during the last four months few of the squad of builders had been ashore. In particular, Mr. Peter Logan, the foreman, and Mr. Robert Selkirk, principal builder, had never once left the rock. The artificers, having made good wages during their stay, like seamen upon a return voyage, were extremely happy, and spent the evening with much innocent mirth and jollity. Wednesday, 30th Aug.

In reflecting upon the state of the matters at the Bell Rock during the working months, when the writer was much with the artificers, nothing can equal the happy manner in which these excellent workmen spent their time. They always went from Arbroath to their arduous task cheering, and they generally returned in the same hearty state. While at the rock, between the tides, they amused themselves in reading, fishing, music, playing cards, draughts, etc., or in sporting with one another. In the workyard at Arbroath the young men were almost, without exception, employed in the evening at school, in writing and arithmetic, and not a few were learning architectural drawing, for which they had every convenience and facility, and were, in a very obliging manner, assisted in their studies by Mr. David Logan, clerk of the works. It therefore affords the most pleasing reflections to look back upon the pursuits of about sixty individuals who for years conducted themselves, on all occasions, in a sober and rational manner.

IV

OPERATIONS OF 1810

The wind had shifted to-day to W.N.W., when the writer, with considerable difficulty, was enabled to land upon the rock for the first time this season, at ten a.m. Upon examining the state of the building, and apparatus in general, he had the satisfaction to find 1810 Thursday, 10th May.

1810 everything in good order. The mortar in all the joints was perfectly entire. The building, now thirty feet in height, was thickly coated with *fuci* to the height of about fifteen feet, calculating from the rock ; on the eastern side, indeed, the growth of seaweed was observable to the full height of thirty feet, and even on the top or upper bed of the last-laid course, especially towards the eastern side, it had germinated, so as to render walking upon it somewhat difficult.

The beacon-house was in a perfectly sound state, and apparently just as it had been left in the month of November. But the tides being neap, the lower parts, particularly where the beams rested on the rock, could not now be seen. The floor of the mortar gallery having been already laid down by Mr. Watt and his men on a former visit, was merely soaked with the sprays ; but the joisting-beams which supported it had, in the course of the winter, been covered with a fine downy conferva produced by the range of the sea. They were also a good deal whitened with the mute of the cormorant and other sea-fowls, which had roosted upon the beacon in winter. Upon ascending to the apartments, it was found that the motion of the sea had thrown open the door of the cook-house : this was only shut with a single latch, that in case of shipwreck at the Bell Rock the mariner might find ready access to the shelter of this forlorn habitation, where a supply of provisions was kept ; and being within two miles and a half of the floating light, a signal could readily be observed, when a boat might be sent to his relief as soon as the weather permitted. An arrangement for this purpose formed one of the instructions on board of the floating light, but happily no instance occurred for putting it in practice. The hearth or fireplace of the cook-house was built of brick in as secure a manner as possible to prevent accident from fire ; but some of the plaster-work had shaken loose, from its damp state and the tremulous motion of the beacon in stormy weather. The writer next ascended to the floor which was occupied by the cabins of himself and his assistants, which were in tolerably good order, having only a damp and musty smell. The barrack for the artificers, over all, was next visited ; it had now a very dreary and deserted appearance when its former thronged state was recollected. In some parts the water had come through the boarding, and had discoloured the lining of green cloth, but it was, nevertheless, in a good habitable condition. While the seamen were employed in landing a stock of provisions, a few of the artificers set to work with great eagerness to sweep and clean the several apartments. The exterior of the beacon was, in the meantime, examined, and found in perfect order. The painting, though it had a somewhat blanched appearance, adhered firmly both on the sides and roof, and

only two or three panes of glass were broken in the cupola, which had either been blown out by the force of the wind or perhaps broken by sea-fowl. 1810

Having on this occasion continued upon the building and beacon a considerable time after the tide had begun to flow, the artificers were occupied in removing the forge from the top of the building, to which the gangway or wooden bridge gave great facility; and, although it stretched or had a span of forty-two feet, its construction was extremely simple, while the roadway was perfectly firm and steady. In returning from this visit to the rock every one was pretty well soused in spray before reaching the tender at two o'clock p.m., where things awaited the landing party in as comfortable a way as such a situation would admit.

The wind was still easterly, accompanied with rather a heavy swell of sea for the operations in hand. A landing was, however, made this morning, when the artificers were immediately employed in scraping the seaweed off the upper course of the building, in order to apply the moulds of the first course of the staircase, that the joggle-holes might be marked off in the upper course of the solid. This was also necessary previously to the writer's fixing the position of the entrance door, which was regulated chiefly by the appearance of the growth of the seaweed on the building, indicating the direction of the heaviest seas, on the opposite side of which the door was placed. The landing-master's crew succeeded in towing into the creek on the western side of the rock the praam-boat with the balance-crane, which had now been on board of the praam for five days. The several pieces of this machine, having been conveyed along the railways upon the waggons to a position immediately under the bridge, were elevated to its level, or thirty feet above the rock, in the following manner. A chain-tackle was suspended over a pulley from the cross-beam connecting the tops of the kingposts of the bridge, which was worked by a winch-machine with wheel, pinion, and barrel, round which last the chain was wound. This apparatus was placed on the beacon side of the bridge, at the distance of about twelve feet from the cross-beam and pulley in the middle of the bridge. Immediately under the cross-beam a hatch was formed in the roadway of the bridge, measuring seven feet in length and five feet in breadth, made to shut with folding boards like a double door, through which stones and other articles were raised; the folding doors were then let down, and the stone or load was gently lowered upon a waggon which was wheeled on railway trucks towards the lighthouse. In this manner the several castings of the balance-crane were got up to the top of the solid of the building. Friday, 11th May.

1810 The several apartments of the beacon-house having been cleaned out and supplied with bedding, a sufficient stock of provisions was put into the store, when Peter Fortune, formerly noticed, lighted his fire in the beacon for the first time this season. Sixteen artificers at the same time mounted to their barrack-room, and all the foremen of the works also took possession of their cabin, all heartily rejoiced at getting rid of the trouble of boating and the sickly motion of the tender.

Saturday, 12th May. The wind was at E.N.E., blowing so fresh, and accompanied with so much sea, that no stones could be landed to-day. The people on the rock, however, were busily employed in screwing together the balance-crane, cutting out the joggle-holes in the upper course, and preparing all things for commencing the building operations.

Sunday, 13th May. The weather still continues boisterous, although the barometer has all the while stood at about 30 inches. Towards evening the wind blew so fresh at E. by S. that the boats both of the *Smeaton* and tender were obliged to be hoisted in, and it was feared that the *Smeaton* would have to slip her moorings. The people on the rock were seen busily employed, and had the balance-crane apparently ready for use, but no communication could be had with them to-day.

Monday, 14th May. The wind continued to blow so fresh, and the *Smeaton* rode so heavily with her cargo, that at noon a signal was made for her getting under weigh, when she stood towards Arbroath ; and on board of the tender we are still without any communication with the people on the rock, where the sea was seen breaking over the top of the building in great sprays, and raging with much agitation among the beams of the beacon.

Thursday, 17th May. The wind, in the course of the day, had shifted from north to west ; the sea being also considerably less, a boat landed on the rock at six p.m., for the first time since the 11th, with the provisions and water brought off by the *Patriot*. The inhabitants of the beacon were all well, but tired above measure for want of employment, as the balance-crane and apparatus was all in readiness. Under these circumstances they felt no less desirous of the return of good weather than those afloat, who were continually tossed with the agitation of the sea. The writer, in particular, felt himself almost as much fatigued and worn-out as he had been at any period since the commencement of the work. The very backward state of the weather at so advanced a period of the season unavoidably created some alarm, lest he should be overtaken with bad weather at a late period of the season, with the building operations in an unfinished state. These apprehensions were, no doubt, rather increased by the inconveniences of his situation afloat, as the tender rolled and pitched

excessively at times. This being also his first off-set for the season, every bone of his body felt sore with preserving a sitting posture while he endeavoured to pass away the time in reading; as for writing, it was wholly impracticable. He had several times entertained thoughts of leaving the station for a few days and going into Arbroath with the tender till the weather should improve; but as the artificers had been landed on the rock he was averse to this at the commencement of the season, knowing also that he would be equally uneasy in every situation till the first cargo was landed: and he therefore resolved to continue at his post until this should be effected. 1810

The wind being now N.W., the sea was considerably run down, and this morning at five o'clock the landing-master's crew, thirteen in number, left the tender; and having now no detention with the landing of artificers, they proceeded to unmoor the *Hedderwick* praam-boat, and towed her alongside of the *Smeaton:* and in the course of the day twenty-three blocks of stone, three casks of pozzolano, three of sand, three of lime, and one of Roman cement, together with three bundles of trenails and three of wedges, were all landed on the rock and raised to the top of the building by means of the tackle suspended from the cross-beam on the middle of the bridge. The stones were then moved along the bridge on the waggon to the building within reach of the balance-crane, with which they were laid in their respective places on the building. The masons immediately thereafter proceeded to bore the trenail-holes into the course below, and otherwise to complete the one in hand. When the first stone was to be suspended by the balance-crane, the bell on the beacon was rung, and all the artificers and seamen were collected on the building. Three hearty cheers were given while it was lowered into its place, and the steward served round a glass of rum, when success was drunk to the further progress of the building. Friday, 18th May.

The wind was southerly to-day, but there was much less sea than yesterday, and the landing-master's crew were enabled to discharge and land twenty-three pieces of stone and other articles for the work. The artificers had completed the laying of the twenty-seventh or first course of the staircase this morning, and in the evening they finished the boring, trenailing, wedging, and grouting it with mortar. At twelve o'clock noon the beacon-house bell was rung, and all hands were collected on the top of the building, where prayers were read for the first time on the lighthouse, which forcibly struck every one, and had, upon the whole, a very impressive effect. Sunday, 20th May.

From the hazardous situation of the beacon-house with regard to fire, being composed wholly of timber, there was no small risk

1810 from accident: and on this account one of the most steady of the artificers was appointed to see that the fire of the cooking-house, and the lights in general, were carefully extinguished at stated hours.

Monday, 4th June. This being the birthday of our much-revered Sovereign King George III, now in the fiftieth year of his reign, the shipping of the Lighthouse service were this morning decorated with colours according to the taste of their respective captains. Flags were also hoisted upon the beacon-house and balance-crane on the top of the building. At twelve noon a salute was fired from the tender, when the King's health was drunk, with all the honours, both on the rock and on board of the shipping.

Tuesday, 5th June. As the lighthouse advanced in height, the cubical contents of the stones were less, but they had to be raised to a greater height; and the walls, being thinner, were less commodious for the necessary machinery and the artificers employed, which considerably retarded the work. Inconvenience was also occasionally experienced from the men dropping their coats, hats, mallets, and other tools, at high-water, which were carried away by the tide; and the danger to the people themselves was now greatly increased. Had any of them fallen from the beacon or building at high-water, while the landing-master's crew were generally engaged with the craft at a distance, it must have rendered the accident doubly painful to those on the rock, who at this time had no boat, and consequently no means of rendering immediate and prompt assistance. In such cases it would have been too late to have got a boat by signal from the tender. A small boat, which could be lowered at pleasure, was therefore suspended by a pair of davits projected from the cook-house, the keel being about thirty feet from the rock. This boat, with its tackle, was put under the charge of James Glen, of whose exertions on the beacon mention has already been made, and who, having in early life been a seaman, was also very expert in the management of a boat. A life-buoy was likewise suspended from the bridge, to which a coil of line two hundred fathoms in length was attached, which could be let out to a person falling into the water, or to the people in the boat, should they not be able to work her with the oars.

Thursday, 7th June. To-day twelve stones were landed on the rock, being the remainder of the *Patriot's* cargo; and the artificers built the thirty-ninth course, consisting of fourteen stones. The Bell Rock works had now a very busy appearance, as the lighthouse was daily getting more into form. Besides the artificers and their cook, the writer and his servant were also lodged on the beacon, counting in all twenty-nine; and at low-water the landing-master's crew, consisting

of from twelve to fifteen seamen, were employed in transporting the building materials, working the landing apparatus on the rock, and dragging the stone waggons along the railways. 1810

In the course of this day the weather varied much. In the morning it was calm, in the middle part of the day there were light airs of wind from the south, and in the evening fresh breezes from the east. The barometer in the writer's cabin in the beacon-house oscillated from 30 inches to 30·42, and the weather was extremely pleasant. This, in any situation, forms one of the chief comforts of life; but, as may easily be conceived, it was doubly so to people stuck, as it were, upon a pinnacle in the middle of the ocean. Friday, 8th June.

One of the praam-boats had been brought to the rock with eleven stones, notwithstanding the perplexity which attended the getting of those formerly landed taken up to the building. Mr. Peter Logan, the foreman builder, interposed and prevented this cargo from being delivered; but the landing-master's crew were exceedingly averse to this arrangement, from an idea that "ill luck" would in future attend the praam, her cargo, and those who navigated her, from thus reversing her voyage. It may be noticed that this was the first instance of a praam-boat having been sent from the Bell Rock with any part of her cargo on board, and was considered so uncommon an occurrence that it became a topic of conversation among the seamen and artificers. Sunday, 10th June.

To-day the stones formerly sent from the rock were safely landed, notwithstanding the augury of the seamen in consequence of their being sent away two days before. Tuesday, 12th June.

To-day twenty-seven stones and eleven joggle-pieces were landed, part of which consisted of the forty-seventh course, forming the storeroom floor. The builders were at work this morning by four o'clock, in the hopes of being able to accomplish the laying of the eighteen stones of this course. But at eight o'clock in the evening they had still two to lay, and as the stones of this course were very unwieldy, being six feet in length, they required much precaution and care both in lifting and laying them. It was only on the writer's suggestion to Mr. Logan that the artificers were induced to leave off, as they had intended to complete this floor before going to bed. The two remaining stones were, however, laid in their places without mortar when the bell on the beacon was rung, and, all hands being collected on the top of the building, three hearty cheers were given on covering the first apartment. The steward then served out a dram to each, when the whole retired to their barrack much fatigued, but with the anticipation of the most perfect repose even in the "hurricane-house," amidst the dashing seas on the Bell Rock. Thursday, 14th June.

1810 While the workmen were at breakfast and dinner it was the writer's usual practice to spend his time on the walls of the building, which, notwithstanding the narrowness of the track, nevertheless formed his principal walk when the rock was under water. But this afternoon he had his writing-desk set upon the storeroom floor, when he wrote to Mrs. Stevenson—certainly the first letter dated from the Bell Rock *Lighthouse*—giving a detail of the fortunate progress of the work, with an assurance that the lighthouse would soon be completed at the rate at which it now proceeded ; and, the *Patriot* having sailed for Arbroath in the evening, he felt no small degree of pleasure in despatching this communication to his family.

The weather still continuing favourable for the operations at the rock, the work proceeded with much energy, through the exertions both of the seamen and artificers. For the more speedy and effectual working of the several tackles in raising the materials as the building advanced in height, and there being a great extent of railway to attend to, which required constant repairs, two additional millwrights were added to the complement on the rock, which, including the writer, now counted thirty-one in all. So crowded was the men's barrack that the beds were ranged five tier in height, allowing only about one foot eight inches for each bed. The artificers commenced this morning at five o'clock, and, in the course of the day, they laid the forty-eighth and forty-ninth courses, consisting each of sixteen blocks. From the favourable state of the weather, and the regular manner in which the work now proceeded, the artificers had generally from four to seven extra hours' work, which, including their stated wages of 3s. 4d., yielded them from 5s. 4d. to about 6s. 10d. per day besides their board ; even the postage of their letters was paid while they were at the Bell Rock. In these advantages the foremen also shared, having about double the pay and amount of premiums of the artificers. The seamen being less out of their element in the Bell Rock operations than the landsmen, their premiums consisted in a slump sum payable at the end of the season, which extended from three to ten guineas.

As the laying of the floors was somewhat tedious, the landing-master and his crew had got considerably beforehand with the building artificers in bringing materials faster to the rock than they could be built. The seamen having, therefore, some spare time, were occasionally employed during fine weather in dredging or grappling for the several mushroom anchors and mooring-chains which had been lost in the vicinity of the Bell Rock during the progress of the work by the breaking loose and drifting of the floating buoys. To encourage their exertions in this search, five guineas were offered as a

premium for each set they should find; and, after much patient application, they succeeded to-day in hooking one of these lost anchors with its chain. 1810

It was a general remark at the Bell Rock, as before noticed, that fish were never plenty in its neighbourhood excepting in good weather. Indeed, the seamen used to speculate about the state of the weather from their success in fishing. When the fish disappeared at the rock, it was considered a sure indication that a gale was not far off, as the fish seemed to seek shelter in deeper water from the roughness of the sea during these changes in the weather. At this time the rock, at high-water, was completely covered with podlies, or the fry of the coal-fish, about six or eight inches in length. The artificers sometimes occupied half an hour after breakfast and dinner in catching these little fishes, but were more frequently supplied from the boats of the tender.

Saturday, 16th June.

The landing-master having this day discharged the *Smeaton* and loaded the *Hedderwick* and *Dickie* praam-boats with nineteen stones, they were towed to their respective moorings, when Captain Wilson, in consequence of the heavy swell of sea, came in his boat to the beacon-house to consult with the writer as to the propriety of venturing the loaded praam-boats with their cargoes to the rock while so much sea was running. After some dubiety expressed on the subject, in which the ardent mind of the landing-master suggested many arguments in favour of his being able to convey the praams in perfect safety, it was acceded to. In bad weather, and especially on occasions of difficulty like the present, Mr. Wilson, who was an extremely active seaman, measuring about five feet three inches in height, of a robust habit, generally dressed himself in what he called a *monkey jacket*, made of thick duffle cloth, with a pair of Dutchman's petticoat trousers, reaching only to his knees, where they were met with a pair of long water-tight boots; with this dress, his glazed hat, and his small brass speaking-trumpet in his hand, he bade defiance to the weather. When he made his appearance in this most suitable attire for the service, his crew seemed to possess additional life, never failing to use their utmost exertions when the captain put on his *storm rigging*. They had this morning commenced loading the praam-boats at four o'clock, and proceeded to tow them into the eastern landing-place, which was accomplished with much dexterity, though not without the risk of being thrown, by the force of the sea, on certain projecting ledges of the rock. In such a case the loss even of a single stone would have greatly retarded the work. For the greater safety in entering the creek it was necessary to put out several warps and guy-ropes to guide the boats into its narrow and intricate entrance; and

1810 it frequently happened that the sea made a clean breach over the praams, which not only washed their decks, but completely drenched the crew in water.

Sunday, 17th June. It was fortunate, in the present state of the weather, that the fiftieth course was in a sheltered spot, within the reach of the tackle of the winch-machine upon the bridge; a few stones were stowed upon the bridge itself, and the remainder upon the building, which kept the artificers at work. The stowing of the materials upon the rock was the department of Alexander Brebner, mason, who spared no pains in attending to the safety of the stones, and who, in the present state of the work, when the stones were landed faster than could be built, generally worked till the water rose to his middle. At one o'clock to-day the bell rung for prayers, and all hands were collected into the upper barrack-room of the beacon-house, when the usual service was performed.

The wind blew very hard in the course of last night from N.E., and to-day the sea ran so high that no boat could approach the rock. During the dinner-hour, when the writer was going to the top of the building as usual, but just as he had entered the door and was about to ascend the ladder, a great noise was heard overhead, and in an instant he was soused in water from a sea which had most unexpectedly come over the walls, though now about fifty-eight feet in height. On making his retreat he found himself completely whitened by the lime, which had mixed with the water while dashing down through the different floors; and, as nearly as he could guess, a quantity equal to about a hogshead had come over the walls, and now streamed out at the door. After having shifted himself, he again sat down in his cabin, the sea continuing to run so high that the builders did not resume their operations on the walls this afternoon. The incident just noticed did not create more surprise in the mind of the writer than the sublime appearance of the waves as they rolled majestically over the rock. This scene he greatly enjoyed while sitting at his cabin window; each wave approached the beacon like a vast scroll unfolding; and in passing discharged a quantity of air, which he not only distinctly felt, but was even sufficient to lift the leaves of a book which lay before him. These waves might be ten or twelve feet in height, and about 250 feet in length, their smaller end being towards the north, where the water was deep, and they were opened or cut through by the interposition of the building and beacon. The gradual manner in which the sea, upon these occasions, is observed to become calm or to subside, is a very remarkable feature of this phenomenon. For example, when a gale is succeeded by a calm, every third or fourth wave forms one of these great seas,

which occur in spaces of from three to five minutes, as noted by the writer's watch; but in the course of the next tide they become less frequent, and take off so as to occur only in ten or fifteen minutes; and, singular enough, at the third tide after such gales, the writer has remarked that only one or two of these great waves appear in the course of the whole tide. 1810

The 19th was a very unpleasant and disagreeable day, both for the seamen and artificers, as it rained throughout with little intermission from four a.m. till eleven p.m., accompanied with thunder and lightning, during which period the work nevertheless continued unremittingly and the builders laid the fifty-first and fifty-second courses. This state of weather was no less severe upon the mortar-makers, who required to temper or prepare the mortar of a thicker or thinner consistency, in some measure, according to the state of the weather. From the elevated position of the building, the mortar gallery on the beacon was now much lower, and the lime-buckets were made to traverse upon a rope distended between it and the building. On occasions like the present, however, there was often a difference of opinion between the builders and the mortar-makers. John Watt, who had the principal charge of the mortar, was a most active worker, but, being somewhat of an irascible temper, the builders occasionally amused themselves at his expense: for while he was eagerly at work with his large iron-shod pestle in the mortar-tub, they often sent down contradictory orders, some crying, "Make it a little stiffer, or thicker, John," while others called out to make it "thinner," to which he generally returned very speedy and sharp replies, so that these conversations at times were rather amusing. Tuesday, 19th June.

During wet weather the situation of the artificers on the top of the building was extremely disagreeable; for although their work did not require great exertion, yet, as each man had his particular part to perform, either in working the crane or in laying the stones, it required the closest application and attention, not only on the part of Mr. Peter Logan, the foreman, who was constantly on the walls, but also of the chief workmen. Robert Selkirk, the principal builder, for example, had every stone to lay in its place. David Cumming, a mason, had the charge of working the tackle of the balance-weight, and James Scott, also a mason, took charge of the purchase with which the stones were laid; while the pointing the joints of the walls with cement was intrusted to William Reid and William Kennedy, who stood upon a scaffold suspended over the walls in rather a frightful manner. The least act of carelessness or inattention on the part of any of these men might have been fatal, not only to themselves, but also to the surrounding workmen,

1810 especially if any accident had happened to the crane itself, while the material damage or loss of a single stone would have put an entire stop to the operations until another could have been brought from Arbroath. The artificers, having wrought seven and a half hours of extra time to-day, had 3s. 9d. of extra pay, while the foremen had 7s. 6d. over and above their stated pay and board. Although, therefore, the work was both hazardous and fatiguing, yet, the encouragement being considerable, they were always very cheerful, and perfectly reconciled to the confinement and other disadvantages of the place.

During fine weather, and while the nights were short, the duty on board of the floating light was literally nothing but a waiting on, and therefore one of her boats, with a crew of five men, daily attended the rock, but always returned to the vessel at night. The carpenter, however, was one of those who was left on board of the ship, as he also acted in the capacity of assistant lightkeeper, being, besides, a person who was apt to feel discontent and to be averse to changing his quarters, especially to work with the millwrights and joiners at the rock, who often, for hours together, wrought knee-deep, and not unfrequently up to the middle, in water. Mr. Watt having about this time made a requisition for another hand, the carpenter was ordered to attend the rock in the floating light's boat. This he did with great reluctance, and found so much fault that he soon got into discredit with his messmates. On this occasion he left the Lighthouse service, and went as a sailor in a vessel bound for America—a step which, it is believed, he soon regretted, as, in the course of things, he would, in all probability, have accompanied Mr John Reid, the principal lightkeeper of the floating light, to the Bell Rock Lighthouse as his principal assistant. The writer had a wish to be of service to this man, as he was one of those who came off to the floating light in the month of September 1807, while she was riding at single anchor after the severe gale of the 7th, at a time when it was hardly possible to make up this vessel's crew; but the crossness of his manner prevented his reaping the benefit of such intentions.

Friday, 22nd June. The building operations had for some time proceeded more slowly, from the higher parts of the lighthouse requiring much longer time than an equal tonnage of the lower courses. The duty of the landing-master's crew had, upon the whole, been easy of late; for though the work was occasionally irregular, yet the stones being lighter, they were more speedily lifted from the hold of the stone vessel to the deck of the praam-boat, and again to the waggons on the railway, after which they came properly under the charge of the foreman builder. It is, however, a strange, though not an un-

common, feature in the human character, that, when people have least to complain of they are most apt to become dissatisfied, as was now the case with the seamen employed in the Bell Rock service about their rations of beer. Indeed, ever since the carpenter of the floating light, formerly noticed, had been brought to the rock, expressions of discontent had been manifested upon various occasions. This being represented to the writer, he sent for Captain Wilson, the landing-master, and Mr. Taylor, commander of the tender, with whom he talked over the subject. They stated that they considered the daily allowance of the seamen in every respect ample, and that, the work being now much lighter than formerly, they had no just ground for complaint; Mr. Taylor adding that, if those who now complained "were even to be fed upon soft bread and turkeys, they would not think themselves right." At twelve noon the work of the landing-master's crew was completed for the day; but at four o'clock, while the rock was under water, those on the beacon were surprised by the arrival of a boat from the tender without any signal having been made from the beacon. It brought the following note to the writer from the landing-master's crew :— 1810

Sir Joseph Banks Tender

"Sir,—We are informed by our masters that our allowance is to be as before, and it is not sufficient to serve us, for we have been at work since four o'clock this morning, and we have come on board to dinner, and there is no beer for us before to-morrow morning, to which a sufficient answer is required before we go from the beacon; and we are, Sir, your most obedient servants."

On reading this, the writer returned a verbal message, intimating that an answer would be sent on board of the tender, at the same time ordering the boat instantly to quit the beacon. He then addressed the following note to the landing-master :—

"*Beacon-house, 22nd June* 1810,
Five o'clock p.m.

"Sir,—I have just now received a letter purporting to be from the landing-master's crew and seamen on board of the *Sir Joseph Banks*, though without either date or signature; in answer to which I enclose a statement of the daily allowance of provisions for the seamen in this service, which you will post up in the ship's galley, and at seven o'clock this evening I will come on board to inquire into this unexpected and most unnecessary demand for an

1810 additional allowance of beer. In the enclosed you will not find any alteration from the original statement, fixed in the galley at the beginning of the season. I have, however, judged this mode of giving your people an answer preferable to that of conversing with them on the beacon. — I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

" Robert Stevenson.

" To Captain Wilson."

" *Beacon House*, 22*nd June* 1810.—Schedule of the daily allowance of provisions to be served out on board of the *Sir Joseph Banks* tender: ' 1½ lb. beef; 1 lb. bread; 8 oz. oatmeal; 2 oz. barley; 2 oz. butter; 3 quarts beer; vegetables and salt no stated allowance. When the seamen are employed in unloading the *Smeaton* and *Patriot*, a draught of beer is, as formerly, to be allowed from the stock of these vessels. Further, in wet and stormy weather, or when the work commences very early in the morning, or continues till a late hour at night, a glass of spirits will also be served out to the crew as heretofore, on the requisition of the landing-master.'

" Robert Stevenson."

On writing this letter and schedule, a signal was made on the beacon for the landing-master's boat, which immediately came to the rock, and the schedule was afterwards stuck up in the tender's galley. When sufficient time had been allowed to the crew to consider of their conduct, a second signal was made for a boat, and at seven o'clock the writer left the Bell Rock, after a residence of four successive weeks in the beacon-house. The first thing which occupied his attention on board of the tender was to look round upon the lighthouse, which he saw, with some degree of emotion and surprise, now vying in height with the beacon-house; for although he had often viewed it from the extremity of the western railway on the rock, yet the scene, upon the whole, seemed far more interesting from the tender's moorings at the distance of about half a mile.

The *Smeaton* having just arrived at her moorings with a cargo, a signal was made for Captain Pool to come on board of the tender, that he might be at hand to remove from the service any of those who might persist in their discontented conduct. One of the two principal leaders in this affair, the master of one of the praam-boats, who had also steered the boat which brought the letter to the beacon, was first called upon deck, and asked if he had read the statement fixed up in the galley this afternoon, and whether he was satisfied with it. He replied that he had read the paper, but was not satisfied, as it

held out no alteration on the allowance, on which he was immediately ordered into the *Smeaton's* boat. The next man called had but lately entered the service, and, being also interrogated as to his resolution, he declared himself to be of the same mind with the praam-master, and was also forthwith ordered into the boat. The writer, without calling any more of the seamen, went forward to the gangway, where they were collected and listening to what was passing upon deck. He addressed them at the hatchway, and stated that two of their companions had just been dismissed the service and sent on board of the *Smeaton* to be conveyed to Arbroath. He therefore wished each man to consider for himself how far it would be proper, by any unreasonableness of conduct, to place themselves in a similar situation, especially as they were aware that it was optional in him either to dismiss them or send them on board a man-of-war. It might appear that much inconveniency would be felt at the rock by a change of hands at this critical period, by checking for a time the progress of a building so intimately connected with the best interests of navigation ; yet this would be but of a temporary nature, while the injury to themselves might be irreparable. It was now, therefore, required of any man who, in this disgraceful manner, chose to leave the service, that he should instantly make his appearance on deck while the *Smeaton's* boat was alongside. But those below having expressed themselves satisfied with their situation—viz., William Brown, George Gibb, Alexander Scott, John Dick, Robert Couper, Alexander Shephard, James Grieve, David Carey, William Pearson, Stuart Eaton, Alexander Lawrence, and John Spink—were accordingly considered as having returned to their duty. This disposition to mutiny, which had so strongly manifested itself, being now happily suppressed, Captain Pool got orders to proceed for Arbroath Bay, and land the two men he had on board, and to deliver the following letter at the office of the workyard :— 1810

" *On board of the Tender off the Bell Rock,*
22nd June 1810, *eight o'clock p.m.*

" Dear Sir,—A discontented and mutinous spirit having manifested itself of late among the landing-master's crew, they struck work to-day and demanded an additional allowance of beer, and I have found it necessary to dismiss D——d and M——e, who are now sent on shore with the *Smeaton.* You will therefore be so good as to pay them their wages, including this day only. Nothing can be more unreasonable than the conduct of the seamen on this occasion, as the landing-master's crew not only had their allowance on board of

1810 the tender, but, in the course of this day, they had drawn no fewer than twenty-four quart pots of beer from the stock of the *Patriot* while unloading her.—I remain, yours truly,

" Robert Stevenson.

" To Mr. Lachlan Kennedy,
Bell Rock Office, Arbroath."

On despatching this letter to Mr. Kennedy, the writer returned to the beacon about nine o'clock, where this afternoon's business had produced many conjectures, especially when the *Smeaton* got under weigh, instead of proceeding to land her cargo. The bell on the beacon being rung, the artificers were assembled on the bridge, when the affair was explained to them. He,'at the same time, congratulated them upon the first appearance of mutiny being happily set at rest by the dismissal of its two principal abettors.

Sunday, 24th June. At the rock, the landing of the materials and the building operations of the light-room store went on successfully, and in a way similar to those of the provision store. To-day it blew fresh breezes ; but the seamen nevertheless landed twenty-eight stones, and the artificers built the fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth courses. The works were visited by Mr. Murdoch, junior, from Messrs. Boulton and Watt's works of Soho. He landed just as the bell rung for prayers, after which the writer enjoyed much pleasure from his very intelligent conversation ; and, having been almost the only stranger he had seen for some weeks, he parted with him, after a short interview, with much regret.

Thursday, 28th June. Last night the wind had shifted to north-east, and, blowing fresh, was accompanied with a heavy surf upon the rock. Towards high-water it had a very grand and wonderful appearance. Waves of considerable magnitude rose as high as the solid or level of the entrance-door, which, being open to the south-west, was fortunately to the leeward ; but on the windward side the sprays flew like lightning up the sloping sides of the building ; and although the walls were now elevated sixty-four feet above the rock, and about fifty-two feet from high-water mark, yet the artificers were nevertheless wetted, and occasionally interrupted, in their operations on the top of the walls. These appearances were, in a great measure, new at the Bell Rock, there having till of late been no building to conduct the seas, or object to compare with them. Although, from the description of the Eddystone Lighthouse, the mind was prepared for such effects, yet they were not expected to the present extent in the summer season ; the sea being most awful to-day, whether observed from the beacon or the building. To windward, the sprays fell from the height above noticed in the most wonderful cascades, and

streamed down the walls of the building in froth as white as snow. To leeward of the lighthouse the collision or meeting of the waves produced a pure white kind of *drift:* it rose about thirty feet in height, like a fine downy mist, which, in its fall, fell upon the face and hands more like a dry powder than a liquid substance. The effect of these seas, as they raged among the beams and dashed upon the higher parts of the beacon, produced a temporary tremulous motion throughout the whole fabric, which to a stranger must have been frightful. 1810

The writer had now been at the Bell Rock since the latter end of May, or about six weeks, during four of which he had been a constant inhabitant of the beacon without having been once off the rock. After witnessing the laying of the sixty-seventh or second course of the bedroom apartment, he left the rock with the tender and went ashore, as some arrangements were to be made for the future conduct of the works at Arbroath, which were soon to be brought to a close; the landing-master's crew having, in the meantime, shifted on board of the *Patriot.* In leaving the rock, the writer kept his eyes fixed upon the lighthouse, which had recently got into the form of a house, having several tiers or stories of windows. Nor was he unmindful of his habitation in the beacon—now far overtopped by the masonry, —where he had spent several weeks in a kind of active retirement, making practical experiment of the fewness of the positive wants of man. His cabin measured not more than four feet three inches in breadth on the floor; and though, from the oblique direction of the beams of the beacon, it widened towards the top, yet it did not admit of the full extension of his arms when he stood on the floor; while its length was little more than sufficient for suspending a cot-bed during the night, calculated for being triced up to the roof through the day, which left free room for the admission of occasional visitants. His folding table was attached with hinges, immediately under the small window of the apartment, and his books, barometer, thermometer, portmanteau, and two or three camp-stools, formed the bulk of his movables. His diet being plain, the paraphernalia of the table were proportionally simple; though everything had the appearance of comfort, and even of neatness, the walls being covered with green cloth formed into panels with red tape, and his bed festooned with curtains of yellow cotton-stuff. If, in speculating upon the abstract wants of man in such a state of exclusion, one were reduced to a single book, the Sacred Volume—whether considered for the striking diversity of its story, the morality of its doctrine, or the important truths of its gospel—would have proved by far the greatest treasure. Sunday, 1st July.

1810 Monday, 2nd July. In walking over the workyard at Arbroath this morning, the writer found that the stones of the course immediately under the cornice were all in hand, and that a week's work would now finish the whole, while the intermediate courses lay ready numbered and marked for shipping to the rock. Among other subjects which had occupied his attention to-day was a visit from some of the relations of George Dall, a young man who had been impressed near Dundee in the month of February last; a dispute had arisen between the magistrates of that burgh and the Regulating Officer as to his right of impressing Dall, who was *bonâ fide* one of the protected seamen in the Bell Rock service. In the meantime, the poor lad was detained, and ultimately committed to the prison of Dundee, to remain until the question should be tried before the Court of Session. His friends were naturally very desirous to have him relieved upon bail. But, as this was only to be done by the judgment of the Court, all that could be said was that his pay and allowances should be continued in the same manner as if he had been upon the sick-list. The circumstances of Dall's case were briefly these:—He had gone to see some of his friends in the neighbourhood of Dundee, in winter, while the works were suspended, having got leave of absence from Mr. Taylor, who commanded the Bell Rock tender, and had in his possession one of the Protection Medals. Unfortunately, however, for Dall, the Regulating Officer thought proper to disregard these documents, as, according to the strict and literal interpretation of the Admiralty regulations, a seaman does not stand protected unless he is actually on board of his ship, or in a boat belonging to her, or has the Admiralty protection in his possession. This order of the Board, however, cannot be rigidly followed in practice; and therefore, when the matter is satisfactorily stated to the Regulating Officer, the impressed man is generally liberated. But in Dall's case this was peremptorily refused, and he was retained at the instance of the magistrates. The writer having brought the matter under the consideration of the Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouses, they authorised it to be tried on the part of the Lighthouse Board, as one of extreme hardship. The Court, upon the first hearing, ordered Dall to be liberated from prison; and the proceedings never went further.

Wednesday, 4th July. Being now within twelve courses of being ready for building the cornice, measures were taken for getting the stones of it and the parapet-wall of the light-room brought from Edinburgh, where, as before noticed, they had been prepared and were in readiness for shipping. The honour of conveying the upper part of the lighthouse, and of landing the last stone of the building on the rock, was considered to belong to Captain Pool of the *Smeaton*, who had been

longer in the service than the master of the *Patriot.* The *Smeaton* was, therefore, now partly loaded with old iron, consisting of broken railways and other lumber which had been lying about the rock, After landing these at Arbroath, she took on board James Craw, with his horse and cart, which could now be spared at the workyard, to be employed in carting the stones from Edinburgh to Leith. Alexander Davidson and William Kennedy, two careful masons, were also sent to take charge of the loading of the stones at Greenside, and stowing them on board of the vessel at Leith. The writer also went on board, with a view to call at the Bell Rock and to take his passage up the Firth of Forth. The wind, however, coming to blow very fresh from the eastward, with thick and foggy weather, it became necessary to reef the mainsail and set the second jib. When in the act of making a tack towards the tender, the sailors who worked the head-sheets were, all of a sudden, alarmed with the sound of the smith's hammer and anvil on the beacon, and had just time to put the ship about to save her from running ashore on the north-western point of the rock, marked " James Craw's Horse." On looking towards the direction from whence the sound came, the building and beacon-house were seen, with consternation, while the ship was hailed by those on the rock, who were no less confounded at seeing the near approach of the *Smeaton;* and, just as the vessel cleared the danger, the smith and those in the mortar gallery made signs in token of their happiness at our fortunate escape. From this occurrence the writer had an experimental proof of the utility of the large bells which were in preparation to be rung by the machinery of the revolving light; for, had it not been for the sound of the smith's anvil, the *Smeaton,* in all probability, would have been wrecked upon the rock. In case the vessel had struck, those on board might have been safe, having now the beacon-house as a place of refuge ; but the vessel, which was going at a great velocity, must have suffered severely, and it was more than probable that the horse would have been drowned, there being no means of getting him out of the vessel. Of this valuable animal and his master we shall take an opportunity of saying more in another place. 1810

The weather cleared up in the course of the night, but the wind shifted to the N.E. and blew very fresh. From the force of the wind, being now the period of spring-tides, a very heavy swell was experienced at the rock. At two o'clock on the following morning the people on the beacon were in a state of great alarm about their safety, as the sea had broke up part of the floor of the mortar gallery, which was thus cleared of the lime-casks and other buoyant articles ; and, the alarm-bell being rung, all hands were called to render what Thursday, 5th July.

1810 assistance was in their power for the safety of themselves and the materials. At this time some would willingly have left the beacon and gone into the building ; the sea, however, ran so high that there was no passage along the bridge of communication, and, when the interior of the lighthouse came to be examined in the morning, it appeared that great quantities of water had come over the walls—now eighty feet in height—and had run down through the several apartments and out at the entrance door.

The upper course of the lighthouse at the workyard of Arbroath was completed on the 6th, and the whole of the stones were, therefore, now ready for being shipped to the rock. From the present state of the works it was impossible that the two squads of artificers at Arbroath and the Bell Rock could meet together at this period ; and as in public works of this kind, which had continued for a series of years, it is not customary to allow the men to separate without what is termed a " finishing-pint," five guineas were for this purpose placed at the disposal of Mr. David Logan, clerk of works. With this sum the stone-cutters at Arbroath had a merry meeting in their barrack, collected their sweethearts and friends, and concluded their labours with a dance. It was remarked, however, that their happiness on this occasion was not without alloy. The consideration of parting and leaving a steady and regular employment, to go in quest of work and mix with other society, after having been harmoniously lodged for years together in one large " guildhall or barrack," was rather painful.

Friday, 6th July. While the writer was at Edinburgh he was fortunate enough to meet with Mrs. Dickson, only daughter of the late celebrated Mr. Smeaton, whose works at the Eddystone Lighthouse had been of such essential consequence to the operations at the Bell Rock. Even her own elegant accomplishments are identified with her father's work, she having herself made the drawing of the vignette on the title-page of the " Narrative of the Eddystone Lighthouse." Every admirer of the works of that singularly eminent man must also feel an obligation to her for the very comprehensive and distinct account given of his life, which is attached to his reports, published, in three volumes quarto, by the Society of Civil Engineers. Mrs. Dickson, being at this time returning from a tour to the Hebrides and Western Highlands of Scotland, had heard of the Bell Rock works, and from their similarity to those of the Eddystone, was strongly impressed with a desire of visiting the spot. But on inquiring for the writer at Edinburgh, and finding from him that the upper part of the lighthouse, consisting of nine courses, might be seen in the immediate vicinity, and also that one of the vessels, which, in compliment to

her father's memory, had been named the *Smeaton*, might also now be seen in Leith, she considered herself extremely fortunate ; and having first visited the works at Greenside, she afterwards went to Leith to see the *Smeaton*, then loading for the Bell Rock. On stepping on board, Mrs. Dickson seemed to be quite overcome with so many concurrent circumstances, tending in a peculiar manner to revive and enliven the memory of her departed father, and, on leaving the vessel, she would not be restrained from presenting the crew with a piece of money. The *Smeaton* had been named spontaneously, from a sense of the obligation which a public work of the description of the Bell Rock owed to the labours and abilities of Mr. Smeaton. The writer certainly never could have anticipated the satisfaction which he this day felt in witnessing the pleasure it afforded to the only representative of this great man's family. 1810

The gale from the N.E. still continued so strong, accompanied with a heavy sea, that the *Patriot* could not approach her moorings ; and although the tender still kept her station, no landing was made to-day at the rock. At high-water it was remarked that the spray rose to the height of about sixty feet upon the building. The *Smeaton* now lay in Leith loaded, but, the wind and weather being so unfavourable for her getting down the Firth, she did not sail till this afternoon. It may be here proper to notice that the loading of the centre of the light-room floor, or last principal stone of the building, did not fail, when put on board, to excite an interest among those connected with the work. When the stone was laid upon the cart to be conveyed to Leith, the seamen fixed an ensign-staff and flag into the circular hole in the centre of the stone, and decorated their own hats, and that of James Craw, the Bell Rock carter, with ribbons; even his faithful and trusty horse Brassey was ornamented with bows and streamers of various colours. The masons also provided themselves with new aprons, and in this manner the cart was attended in its progress to the ship. When the cart came opposite the Trinity House of Leith, the officer of that corporation made his appearance dressed in his uniform, with his staff of office; and when it reached the harbour, the shipping in the different tiers where the *Smeaton* lay hoisted their colours, manifesting by these trifling ceremonies the interest with which the progress of this work was regarded by the public, as ultimately tending to afford safety and protection to the mariner. The wind had fortunately shifted to the S.W., and about five o'clock this afternoon the *Smeaton* reached the Bell Rock. Friday, 20th July.

The artificers had finished the laying of the balcony course, excepting the centre-stone of the light-room floor, which, like the centres of the other floors, could not be laid in its place till after the Friday, 27th July.

1810 removal of the foot and shaft of the balance-crane. During the dinner-hour, when the men were off work, the writer generally took some exercise by walking round the walls when the rock was under water ; but to-day his boundary was greatly enlarged, for, instead of the narrow wall as a path, he felt no small degree of pleasure in walking round the balcony and passing out and in at the space allotted for the light-room door. In the labours of this day both the artificers and seamen felt their work to be extremely easy compared with what it had been for some days past.

Sunday, 29th July. Captain Wilson and his crew had made preparations for landing the last stone, and, as may well be supposed, this was a day of great interest at the Bell Rock. " That it might lose none of its honours," as he expressed himself, the *Hedderwick* praam-boat, with which the first stone of the building had been landed, was appointed also to carry the last. At seven o'clock this evening the seamen hoisted three flags upon the *Hedderwick*, when the colours of the *Dickie* praam-boat, tender, *Smeaton*, floating light, beacon-house, and light-house were also displayed ; and, the weather being remarkably fine, the whole presented a very gay appearance, and, in connection with the associations excited, the effect was very pleasing. The praam which carried the stone was towed by the seamen in gallant style to the rock, and, on its arrival, cheers were given as a finale to the landing department.

Monday, 30th July. The ninetieth or last course of the building having been laid to-day, which brought the masonry to the height of one hundred and two feet six inches, the lintel of the light-room door, being the finishing-stone of the exterior walls, was laid with due formality by the writer, who, at the same time, pronounced the following benediction : " May the Great Architect of the Universe, under whose blessing this perilous work has prospered, preserve it as a guide to the mariner."

Friday, 3rd Aug. At three p.m., the necessary preparations having been made, the artificers commenced the completing of the floors of the several apartments, and at seven o'clock the centre-stone of the light-room floor was laid, which may be held as finishing the masonry of this important national edifice. After going through the usual ceremonies observed by the brotherhood on occasions of this kind, the writer, addressing himself to the artificers and seamen who were present, briefly alluded to the utility of the undertaking as a monument of the wealth of British commerce, erected through the spirited measures of the Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouses by means of the able assistance of those who now surrounded him. He then took an opportunity of stating that toward those connected

with this arduous work he would ever retain the most heartfelt regard in all their interests. 1810

When the bell was rung as usual on the beacon this morning, every one seemed as if he were at a loss what to make of himself. At this period the artificers at the rock consisted of eighteen masons, two joiners, one millwright, one smith, and one mortar-maker, besides Messrs. Peter Logan and Francis Watt, foremen, counting in all twenty-five ; and matters were arranged for proceeding to Arbroath this afternoon with all hands. The *Sir Joseph Banks* tender had by this time been afloat, with little intermission, for six months, during greater part of which the artificers had been almost constantly off at the rock, and were now much in want of necessaries of almost every description. Not a few had lost different articles of clothing, which had dropped into the sea from the beacon and building. Some wanted jackets ; others, from want of hats, wore nightcaps ; each was, in fact, more or less curtailed in his wardrobe, and it must be confessed that at best the party were but in a very tattered condition. This morning was occupied in removing the artificers and their bedding on board of the tender ; and, although their personal luggage was easily shifted, the boats had, nevertheless, many articles to remove from the beacon-house, and were consequently employed in this service till eleven a.m. All hands being collected, and just ready to embark, as the water had nearly overflowed the rock, the writer, in taking leave, after alluding to the harmony which had ever marked the conduct of those employed on the Bell Rock, took occasion to compliment the great zeal, attention, and abilities of Mr. Peter Logan and Mr. Francis Watt, foremen ; Captain James Wilson, landing-master ; and Captain David Taylor, commander of the tender, who, in their several departments, had so faithfully discharged the duties assigned to them, often under circumstances the most difficult and trying. The health of these gentlemen was drunk with much warmth of feeling by the artificers and seamen, who severally expressed the satisfaction they had experienced in acting under them; after which the whole party left the rock. Saturday, 4th Aug.

In sailing past the floating light, mutual compliments were made by a display of flags between that vessel and the tender ; and at five p.m. the latter vessel entered the harbour of Arbroath, where the party were heartily welcomed by a numerous company of spectators, who had collected to see the artificers arrive after so long an absence from the port. In the evening the writer invited the foremen and captains of the service, together with Mr. David Logan, clerk of works at Arbroath, and Mr. Lachlan Kennedy, engineer's clerk and

1810 bookkeeper, and some of their friends, to the principal inn, where the evening was spent very happily; and after "His Majesty's Health" and "The Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouses" had been given, "Stability to the Bell Rock Lighthouse" was hailed as a standing toast in the Lighthouse service.

Sunday, 5th Aug. The author has formerly noticed the uniformly decent and orderly deportment of the artificers who were employed at the Bell Rock Lighthouse, and to-day, it is believed, they very generally attended church, no doubt with grateful hearts for the narrow escapes from personal danger which all of them had more or less experienced during their residence at the rock.

Tuesday, 14th Aug. The *Smeaton* sailed to-day at one p.m., having on board sixteen artificers, with Mr. Peter Logan, together with a supply of provisions and necessaries, who left the harbour pleased and happy to find themselves once more afloat in the Bell Rock service. At seven o'clock the tender was made fast to her moorings, when the artificers landed on the rock and took possession of their old quarters in the beacon-house, with feelings very different from those of 1807, when the works commenced.

The barometer for some days past had been falling from 29·90, and to-day it was 29·50, with the wind at N.E., which, in the course of this day, increased to a strong gale accompanied with a sea which broke with great violence upon the rock. At twelve noon the tender rode very heavily at her moorings, when her chain broke at about ten fathoms from the ship's bows. The kedge-anchor was immediately let go, to hold her till the floating buoy and broken chain should be got on board. But while this was in operation the hawser of the kedge was chafed through on the rocky bottom and parted, when the vessel was again adrift. Most fortunately, however, she cast off with her head from the rock, and narrowly cleared it, when she sailed up the Firth of Forth to wait the return of better weather. The artificers were thus left upon the rock with so heavy a sea running that it was ascertained to have risen to the height of eighty feet on the building. Under such perilous circumstances it would be difficult to describe the feelings of those who, at this time, were cooped up in the beacon in so forlorn a situation, with the sea not only raging under them, but occasionally falling from a great height upon the roof of their temporary lodging, without even the attending vessel in view to afford the least gleam of hope in the event of any accident. It is true that they had now the masonry of the light-house to resort to, which, no doubt, lessened the actual danger of their situation; but the building was still without a roof, and the deadlights, or storm-shutters, not being yet fitted, the windows of

the lower story were stove in and broken, and at high-water the sea ran in considerable quantities out at the entrance door. 1810

The gale continues with unabated violence to-day, and the sprays rise to a still greater height, having been carried over the masonry of the building, or about ninety feet above the level of the sea. At four o'clock this morning it was breaking into the cook's berth, when he rang the alarm-bell, and all hands turned out to attend to their personal safety. The floor of the smith's, or mortar gallery, was now completely burst up by the force of the sea, when the whole of the deals and the remaining articles upon the floor were swept away, such as the cast-iron mortar-tubs, the iron hearth of the forge, the smith's bellows, and even his anvil were thrown down upon the rock. Before the tide rose to its full height to-day some of the artificers passed along the bridge into the lighthouse, to observe the effects of the sea upon it, and they reported that they had felt a slight tremulous motion in the building when great seas struck it in a certain direction, about high-water mark. On this occasion the sprays were again observed to wet the balcony, and even to come over the parapet wall into the interior of the light-room. Thursday, 16th Aug.

The wind being at W.S.W., and the weather more moderate, both the tender and the *Smeaton* got to their moorings on the 23rd, when all hands were employed in transporting the sash-frames from on board of the *Smeaton* to the rock. In the act of setting up one of these frames upon the bridge, it was unguardedly suffered to lose its balance, and in saving it from damage, Captain Wilson met with a severe bruise in the groin, on the seat of a gun-shot wound received in the early part of his life. This accident laid him aside for several days. Thursday, 23rd Aug.

The sash-frames of the light-room, eight in number, and weighing each 254 pounds, having been got safely up to the top of the building were ranged on the balcony in the order in which they were numbered for their places on the top of the parapet-wall; and the balance-crane, that useful machine having now lifted all the heavier articles, was unscrewed and lowered, to use the landing-master's phrase, "in mournful silence." Monday, 27th Aug.

The steps of the stair being landed, and all the weightier articles of the light-room got up to the balcony, the wooden bridge was now to be removed, as it had a very powerful effect upon the beacon when a heavy sea struck it, and could not possibly have withstood the storms of a winter. Everything having been cleared from the bridge, and nothing left but the two principal beams with their horizontal braces, James Glen, at high-water, proceeded with a saw to cut through the beams at the end next the beacon, which likewise Sunday, 2nd Sept.

1810 disengaged their opposite extremity, inserted a few inches into the building. The frame was then gently lowered into the water, and floated off to the *Smeaton* to be towed to Arbroath, to be applied as part of the materials in the erection of the lightkeepers' houses. After the removal of the bridge, the aspect of things at the rock was much altered. The beacon-house and building had both a naked look to those accustomed to their former appearance; a curious optical deception was also remarked, by which the lighthouse seemed to incline from the perpendicular towards the beacon. The horizontal rope-ladder before noticed was again stretched to preserve the communication, and the artificers were once more obliged to practise the awkward and straddling manner of their passage between them during 1809.

At twelve noon the bell rung for prayers, after which the artificers went to dinner, when the writer passed along the rope-ladder to the lighthouse, and went through the several apartments, which were now cleared of lumber. In the afternoon all hands were summoned to the interior of the house, when he had the satisfaction of laying the upper step of the stair, or last stone of the building. This ceremony concluded with three cheers, the sound of which had a very loud and strange effect within the walls of the lighthouse. At six o'clock Mr. Peter Logan and eleven of the artificers embarked with the writer for Arbroath, leaving Mr. James Glen with the special charge of the beacon and railways, Mr. Robert Selkirk with the building, with a few artificers to fit the temporary windows to render the house habitable.

Sunday, 14th Oct. On returning from his voyage to the Northern Lighthouses, the writer landed at the Bell Rock on Sunday, the 14th of October, and had the pleasure to find, from the very favourable state of the weather, that the artificers had been enabled to make great progress with the fitting-up of the light-room.

Friday, 19th Oct. The light-room work had proceeded, as usual, to-day under the direction of Mr. Dove, assisted in the plumber-work by Mr. John Gibson, and in the brazier-work by Mr. Joseph Fraser; while Mr. James Slight, with the joiners, were fitting up the storm-shutters of the windows. In these several departments the artificers were at work till seven o'clock p.m., and it being then dark, Mr. Dove gave orders to drop work in the light-room; and all hands proceeded from thence to the beacon-house, when Charles Henderson, smith, and Henry Dickson, brazier, left the work together. Being both young men, who had been for several weeks upon the rock, they had become familiar, and even playful, on the most difficult parts about the beacon and building. This evening they were trying to outrun

each other in descending from the light-room, when Henderson led the way; but they were in conversation with each other till they came to the rope-ladder distended between the entrance-door of the lighthouse and the beacon. Dickson, on reaching the cook-room, was surprised at not seeing his companion, and inquired hastily for Henderson. Upon which the cook replied, "Was he before you upon the rope-ladder?" Dickson answered, "Yes; and I thought I heard something fall." Upon this the alarm was given, and links were immediately lighted, with which the artificers descended on the legs of the beacon, as near the surface of the water as possible, it being then about full tide, and the sea breaking to a considerable height upon the building, with the wind at S.S.E. But, after watching till low-water, and searching in every direction upon the rock, it appeared that poor Henderson must have unfortunately fallen through the rope-ladder and been washed into the deep water. 1810

The deceased had passed along this rope-ladder many hundred times, both by day and night, and the operations in which he was employed being nearly finished, he was about to leave the rock when this melancholy catastrophe took place. The unfortunate loss of Henderson cast a deep gloom upon the minds of all who were at the rock, and it required some management on the part of those who had charge to induce the people to remain patiently at their work; as the weather now became more boisterous, and the nights long, they found their habitation extremely cheerless, while the winds were howling about their ears, and the waves lashing with fury against the beams of their insulated habitation.

The wind had shifted in the night to N.W., and blew a fresh gale, while the sea broke with violence upon the rock. It was found impossible to land, but the writer, from the boat, hailed Mr. Dove, and directed the ball to be immediately fixed. The necessary preparations were accordingly made, while the vessel made short tacks on the southern side of the rock, in comparatively smooth water. At noon Mr. Dove, assisted by Mr. James Slight, Mr. Robert Selkirk, Mr. James Glen, and Mr. John Gibson, plumber, with considerable difficulty, from the boisterous state of the weather, got the gilded ball screwed on, measuring two feet in diameter, and forming the principal ventilator at the upper extremity of the cupola of the light-room. At Mr. Hamilton's desire, a salute of seven guns was fired on this occasion, and, all hands being called to the quarter-deck, "Stability to the Bell Rock Lighthouse" was not forgotten. Tuesday, 23rd Oct.

On reaching the rock it was found that a very heavy sea still ran upon it; but the writer having been disappointed on two former occasions, and, as the erection of the house might now be considered Tuesday, 30th Oct.

1810 complete, there being nothing wanted externally, excepting some of the storm-shutters for the defence of the windows, he was the more anxious at this time to inspect it. Two well-manned boats were therefore ordered to be in attendance; and, after some difficulty, the wind being at N.N.E., they got safely into the western creek, though not without encountering plentiful sprays. It would have been impossible to have attempted a landing to-day, under any other circumstances than with boats perfectly adapted to the purpose, and with seamen who knew every ledge of the rock, and even the length of the sea-weeds at each particular spot, so as to dip their oars into the water accordingly, and thereby prevent them from getting entangled. But what was of no less consequence to the safety of the party, Captain Wilson, who always steered the boat, had a perfect knowledge of the set of the different waves, while the crew never shifted their eyes from observing his motions, and the strictest silence was preserved by every individual except himself.

On entering the house, the writer had the pleasure to find it in a somewhat habitable condition, the lower apartments being closed in with temporary windows, and fitted with proper storm-shutters. The lowest apartment at the head of the staircase was occupied with water, fuel, and provisions, put up in a temporary way until the house could be furnished with proper utensils. The second, or light-room store, was at present much encumbered with various tools and apparatus for the use of the workmen. The kitchen immediately over this had, as yet, been supplied only with a common ship's caboose and plate-iron funnel, while the necessary cooking utensils had been taken from the beacon. The bedroom was for the present used as the joiners' workshop, and the strangers' room, immediately under the light-room, was occupied by the artificers, the beds being ranged in tiers, as was done in the barrack of the beacon. The light-room, though unprovided with its machinery, being now covered over with the cupola, glazed and painted, had a very complete and cleanly appearance. The balcony was only as yet fitted with a temporary rail, consisting of a few iron stanchions, connected with ropes; and in this state it was necessary to leave it during the winter.

Having gone over the whole of the low-water works on the rock, the beacon, and lighthouse, and being satisfied that only the most untoward accident in the landing of the machinery could prevent the exhibition of the light in the course of the winter, Mr. John Reid, formerly of the floating light, was now put in charge of the lighthouse as principal keeper; Mr. James Slight had charge of the operations

of the artificers, while Mr. James Dove and the smiths, having finished the frame of the light-room, left the rock for the present. With these arrangements the writer bade adieu to the works for the season. At eleven a.m. the tide was far advanced ; and there being now little or no shelter for the boats at the rock, they had to be pulled through the breach of sea, which came on board in great quantities, and it was with extreme difficulty that they could be kept in the proper direction of the landing-creek. On this occasion he may be permitted to look back with gratitude on the many escapes made in the course of this arduous undertaking, now brought so near to a successful conclusion. 1810

On Monday, the 5th, the yacht again visited the rock, when Mr. Slight and the artificers returned with her to the workyard, where a number of things were still to prepare connected with the temporary fitting up of the accommodation for the lightkeepers. Mr. John Reid and Peter Fortune were now the only inmates of the house. This was the smallest number of persons hitherto left in the lighthouse. As four lightkeepers were to be the complement, it was intended that three should always be at the rock. Its present inmates, however, could hardly have been better selected for such a situation; Mr. Reid being a person possessed of the strictest notions of duty and habits of regularity from long service on board of a man-of-war, while Mr. Fortune had one of the most happy and contented dispositions imaginable. Monday, 5th Nov.

From Saturday the 10th till Tuesday the 13th, the wind had been from N.E. blowing a heavy gale ; but to-day, the weather having greatly moderated, Captain Taylor, who now commanded the *Smeaton*, sailed at two o'clock a.m. for the Bell Rock. At five the floating light was hailed and found to be all well. Being a fine moonlight morning, the seamen were changed from the one ship to the other. At eight, the *Smeaton* being off the rock, the boats were manned, and taking a supply of water, fuel, and other necessaries, landed at the western side, when Mr. Reid and Mr. Fortune were found in good health and spirits. Tuesday, 13th Nov.

Mr. Reid stated that during the late gales, particularly on Friday, the 30th, the wind veering from S.E. to N.E., both he and Mr. Fortune sensibly felt the house tremble when particular seas struck, about the time of high-water ; the former observing that it was a tremor of that sort which rather tended to convince him that everything about the building was sound, and reminded him of the effect produced when a good log of timber is struck sharply with a mallet ; but, with every confidence in the stability of the building, he nevertheless confessed that, in so forlorn a situation, they were

not insensible to those emotions which, he emphatically observed, "made a man look back upon his former life."

1811 Friday, 1st Feb. The day, long wished for, on which the mariner was to see a light exhibited on the Bell Rock at length arrived. Captain Wilson, as usual, hoisted the float's lanterns to the topmast on the evening of the 1st of February; but the moment that the light appeared on the rock, the crew, giving three cheers, lowered them, and finally extinguished the lights.

ADDITIONAL MEMORIES AND PORTRAITS

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I

RANDOM MEMORIES

I. THE COAST OF FIFE

MANY writers have vigorously described the pains of the first day or the first night at school ; to a boy of any enterprise, I believe, they are more often agreeably exciting. Misery—or at least misery unrelieved—is confined to another period, to the days of suspense and the " dreadful looking-for " of departure ; when the old life is running to an end, and the new life, with its new interests, not yet begun ; and to the pain of an imminent parting, there is added the unrest of a state of conscious pre-existence. The area railings, the beloved shop-window, the smell of semi-suburban tanpits, the song of the church-bells upon a Sunday, the thin, high voices of compatriot children in a playing-field—what a sudden, what an overpowering pathos breathes to him from each familiar circumstance ! The assaults of sorrow come not from within, as it seems to him, but from without. I was proud and glad to go to school ; had I been let alone, I could have borne up like any hero ; but there was around me, in all my native town, a conspiracy of lamentation : " Poor little boy, he is going away —unkind little boy, he is going to leave us " ; so the unspoken burthen followed me as I went, with yearning and reproach. And at length, one melancholy afternoon in the

early autumn, and at a place where it seems to me, looking back, it must be always autumn and generally Sunday, there came suddenly upon the face of all I saw—the long empty road, the lines of the tall houses, the church upon the hill, the woody hillside garden—a look of such a piercing sadness that my heart died; and seating myself on a door-step, I shed tears of miserable sympathy. A benevolent cat cumbered me the while with consolations—we two were alone in all that was visible of the London Road: two poor waifs who had each tasted sorrow—and she fawned upon the weeper, and gambolled for his entertainment, watching the effect, it seemed, with motherly eyes.

For the sake of the cat, God bless her! I confessed at home the story of my weakness; and so it comes about that I owed a certain journey, and the reader owes the present paper, to a cat in the London Road. It was judged, if I had thus brimmed over on the public highway, some change of scene was (in the medical sense) indicated; my father at the time was visiting the harbour lights of Scotland; and it was decided that he should take me along with him around a portion of the shores of Fife; my first professional tour, my first journey in the complete character of man, without the help of petticoats.

The Kingdom of Fife (that royal province) may be observed by the curious on the map, occupying a tongue of land between the firths of Forth and Tay. It may be continually seen from many parts of Edinburgh (among the rest, from the windows of my father's house) dying away into the distance and the easterly *haar* with one smoky seaside town beyond another, or in winter printing on the grey heaven some glittering hill-tops. It has no beauty to recommend it, being a low, sea-salted, wind-vexed promontory; trees very rare, except (as common on the east coast) along the dens of rivers; the fields well cultivated, I understand, but not lovely to the eye. It is of the coast I speak: the interior may be the garden of Eden. History broods over that part of the world like the easterly

haar. Even on the map, its long row of Gaelic place-names bear testimony to an old and settled race. Of these little towns, posted along the shore as close as sedges, each with its bit of harbour, its old weather-beaten church or public building, its flavour of decayed prosperity and decaying fish, not one but has its legend, quaint or tragic: Dunfermline, in whose royal towers the king may be still observed (in the ballad) drinking the blood-red wine; somnolent Inverkeithing, once the quarantine of Leith; Aberdour, hard by the monastic islet of Inchcolm, hard by Donibristle where the "bonny face was spoiled": Burntisland, where, when Paul Jones was off the coast, the Reverend Mr. Shirra had a table carried between tide-marks, and publicly prayed against the rover at the pitch of his voice and his broad lowland dialect; Kinghorn, where Alexander "brak's neck-bane" and left Scotland to the English wars; Kirkcaldy, where the witches once prevailed extremely and sank tall ships and honest mariners in the North Sea; Dysart, famous—well, famous at least to me for the Dutch ships that lay in its harbour, painted like toys and with pots of flowers and cages of song-birds in the cabin-windows, and for one particular Dutch skipper who would sit all day in slippers on the break of the poop, smoking a long German pipe; Wemyss (pronounced Weems) with its bat-haunted caves, where the Chevalier Johnstone, on his flight from Culloden, passed a night of superstitious terrors; Leven, a bald, quite modern place, sacred to summer visitors, whence there has gone but yesterday the tall figure and the white locks of the last Englishman in Delhi, my uncle Dr. Balfour, who was still walking his hospital rounds, while the troopers from Meerut clattered and cried "Deen Deen" along the streets of the imperial city, and Willoughby mustered his handful of heroes at the magazine, and the nameless brave one in the telegraph office was perhaps already fingering his last despatch; and just a little beyond Leven, Largo Law and the smoke of Largo town mounting about its feet, the town of Alexander Selkirk, better known under the

name of Robinson Crusoe. So on the list might be pursued (only for private reasons, which the reader will shortly have an opportunity to guess) by St. Monans, and Pittenweem, and the two Anstruthers, and Cellardyke, and Crail, where Primate Sharpe was once a humble and innocent country minister: on to the heel of the land, to Fife Ness, overlooked by a sea-wood of matted elders and the quaint old mansion of Balcomie, itself overlooking but the breach or the quiescence of the deep—the Carr Rock beacon rising close in front, and as night draws in, the star of the Inchcape reef springing up on the one hand, and the star of the May Island on the other, and farther off yet a third and a greater on the craggy foreland of St. Abb's. And but a little way round the corner of the land, imminent itself above the sea, stands the gem of the province and the light of mediæval Scotland, St. Andrews, where the great Cardinal Beaton held garrison against the world, and the second of the name and title perished (as you may read in Knox's jeering narrative) under the knives of true-blue Protestants, and to this day (after so many centuries) the current voice of the professor is not hushed.

Here it was that my first tour of inspection began, early on a bleak easterly morning. There was a crashing run of sea upon the shore, I recollect, and my father and the man of the harbour light must sometimes raise their voices to be audible. Perhaps it is from this circumstance, that I always imagine St. Andrews to be an ineffectual seat of learning, and the sound of the east wind and the bursting surf to linger in its drowsy class-rooms and confound the utterance of the professor, until teacher and taught are alike drowned in oblivion, and only the sea-gull beats on the windows and the draught of the sea-air rustles in the pages of the open lecture. But upon all this, and the romance of St. Andrews in general, the reader must consult the works of Mr. Andrew Lang; who has written of it but the other day in his dainty prose and with his incommunicable humour, and long ago, in one of his best poems, with grace

and local truth and a note of unaffected pathos. Mr. Lang knows all about the romance, I say, and the educational advantages, but I doubt if he had turned his attention to the harbour lights ; and it may be news even to him, that in the year 1863 their case was pitiable. Hanging about with the east wind humming in my teeth, and my hands (I make no doubt) in my pockets, I looked for the first time upon that tragi-comedy of the visiting engineer which I have seen so often re-enacted on a more important stage. Eighty years ago, I find my grandfather writing : " It is the most painful thing that can occur to me to have a correspondence of this kind with any of the keepers, and when I come to the Light House, instead of having the satisfaction to meet them with approbation and welcome their Family, it is distressing when one is obliged to put on a most angry countenance and demeanour." This painful obligation has been hereditary in my race. I have myself, on a perfectly amateur and unauthorised inspection of Turnberry Point, bent my brows upon the keeper on the question of storm-panes ; and felt a keen pang of self-reproach, when we went downstairs again and I found he was making a coffin for his infant child ; and then regained my equanimity with the thought that I had done the man a service, and when the proper inspector came, he would be readier with his panes. The human race is perhaps credited with more duplicity than it deserves. The visitation of a lighthouse at least is a business of the most transparent nature. As soon as the boat grates on the shore, and the keepers step forward in their uniformed coats, the very slouch of the fellows' shoulders tells their story, and the engineer may begin at once to assume his " angry countenance." Certainly the brass of the handrail will be clouded ; and if the brass be not immaculate, certainly all will be to match—the reflectors scratched, the spare lamp unready, the storm-panes in the storehouse. If a light is not rather more than middling good, it will be radically bad. Mediocrity (except in literature) appears to be un-

attainable by man. But of course the unfortunate of St. Andrews was only an amateur, he was not in the Service, he had no uniform coat, he was, I believe, a plumber by his trade, and stood (in the mediæval phrase) quite out of the danger of my father; but he had a painful interview for all that, and perspired extremely.

From St. Andrews we drove over Magus Muir. My father had announced we were "to post," and the phrase called up in my hopeful mind visions of top-boots and the pictures in Rowlandson's "Dance of Death"; but it was only a jingling cab that came to the inn door, such as I had driven in a thousand times at the low price of one shilling on the streets of Edinburgh. Beyond this disappointment, I remember nothing of that drive. It is a road I have often travelled, and of not one of these journeys do I remember any single trait. The fact has not been suffered to encroach on the truth of the imagination. I still see Magus Muir two hundred years ago: a desert place, quite unenclosed; in the midst, the primate's carriage fleeing at the gallop; the assassins loose-reined in pursuit, Burley Balfour, pistol in hand, among the first. No scene of history has ever written itself so deeply on my mind; not because Balfour, that questionable zealot, was an ancestral cousin of my own; not because of the pleadings of the victim and his daughter; not even because of the live bum-bee that flew out of Sharpe's 'bacco-box, thus clearly indicating his complicity with Satan; nor merely because, as it was after all a crime of a fine religious flavour, it figured in Sunday books and afforded a grateful relief from "Ministering Children" or the "Memoirs of Mrs. Katherine Winslowe." The figure that always fixed my attention is that of Hackston of Rathillet, sitting in the saddle with his cloak about his mouth, and through all that long, bungling, vociferous hurly-burly, revolving privately a case of conscience. He would take no hand in the deed, because he had a private spite against the victim, and "that action" must be sullied with no suggestion of a

worldly motive; on the other hand, "that action" in itself was highly justified, he had cast in his lot with "the actors," and he must stay there, inactive, but publicly sharing the responsibility. "You are a gentleman—you will protect me!" cried the wounded old man, crawling towards him. "I will never lay a hand on you," said Hackston, and put his cloak about his mouth. It is an old temptation with me to pluck away that cloak and see the face—to open that bosom and to read the heart. With incomplete romances about Hackston, the drawers of my youth were lumbered. I read him up in every printed book that I could lay my hands on. I even dug among the Wodrow manuscripts, sitting shame-faced in the very room where my hero had been tortured two centuries before, and keenly conscious of my youth in the midst of other and (as I fondly thought) more gifted students. All was vain: that he had passed a riotous nonage, that he was a zealot, that he twice displayed (compared with his grotesque companions) some tincture of soldierly resolution and even of military common sense, and that he figured memorably in the scene on Magus Muir, so much and no more could I make out. But whenever I cast my eyes backward, it is to see him like a landmark on the plains of history, sitting with his cloak about his mouth, inscrutable. How small a thing creates an immortality! I do not think he can have been a man entirely commonplace; but had he not thrown his cloak about his mouth, or had the witnesses forgot to chronicle the action, he would not thus have haunted the imagination of my boyhood, and to-day he would scarce delay me for a paragraph. An incident, at once romantic and dramatic, which at once awakes the judgment and makes a picture for the eye, how little do we realise its perdurable power! Perhaps no one does so but the author, just as none but he appreciates the influence of jingling words; so that he looks on upon life, with something of a covert smile, seeing people led by what they fancy to be thoughts and what are really the accustomed

artifices of his own trade, or roused by what they take to be principles and are really picturesque effects. In a pleasant book about a school-class club, Colonel Fergusson has recently told a little anecdote. A "Philosophical Society" was formed by some Academy boys—among them, Colonel Fergusson himself, Fleeming Jenkin, and Andrew Wilson, the Christian Buddhist and author of "The Abode of Snow." Before these learned pundits, one member laid the following ingenious problem: "What would be the result of putting a pound of potassium in a pot of porter?" "I should think there would be a number of interesting bi-products," said a smatterer at my elbow; but for me the tale itself has a bi-product, and stands as a type of much that is most human. For this inquirer, who conceived himself to burn with a zeal entirely chemical, was really immersed in a design of a quite different nature: unconsciously to his own recently breeched intelligence, he was engaged in literature. Putting, pound, potassium, pot, porter; initial p, mediant t—that was his idea, poor little boy! So with politics and that which excites men in the present, so with history and that which rouses them in the past: there lie, at the root of what appears, most serious unsuspected elements.

The triple town of Anstruther Wester, Anstruther Easter, and Cellardyke, all three Royal Burghs—or two Royal Burghs and a less distinguished suburb, I forget which—lies continuously along the seaside, and boasts of either two or three separate parish churches, and either two or three separate harbours. These ambiguities are painful; but the fact is (although it argues me uncultured), I am but poorly posted up on Cellardyke. My business lay in the two Anstruthers. A tricklet of a stream divides them, spanned by a bridge; and over the bridge at the time of my knowledge, the celebrated Shell House stood outpost on the west. This had been the residence of an agreeable eccentric; during his fond tenancy he had illustrated the outer walls, as high (if I remember rightly) as the roof, with

elaborate patterns and pictures, and snatches of verse in the vein of *exegi monumentum;* shells and pebbles, artfully contrasted and conjoined, had been his medium; and I like to think of him standing back upon the bridge, when all was finished, drinking in the general effect, and (like Gibbon) already lamenting his employment.

The same bridge saw another sight in the seventeenth century. Mr. Thomson, the "curat" of Anstruther Easter, was a man highly obnoxious to the devout: in the first place, because he was a "curat"; in the second place, because he was a person of irregular and scandalous life; and in the third place, because he was generally suspected of dealings with the Enemy of Man. These three disqualifications, in the popular literature of the time, go hand in hand; but the end of Mr. Thomson was a thing quite by itself, and, in the proper phrase, a manifest judgment. He had been at a friend's house in Anstruther Wester, where (and elsewhere, I suspect) he had partaken of the bottle; indeed, to put the thing in our cold modern way, the reverend gentleman was on the brink of *delirium tremens.* It was a dark night, it seems; a little lassie came carrying a lantern to fetch the curate home; and away they went down the street of Anstruther Wester, the lantern swinging a bit in the child's hand, the barred lustre tossing up and down along the front of slumbering houses, and Mr. Thomson not altogether steady on his legs nor (to all appearance) easy in his mind. The pair had reached the middle of the bridge when (as I conceive the scene) the poor tippler started in some baseless fear and looked behind him; the child, already shaken by the minister's strange behaviour, started also; in so doing she would jerk the lantern; and for the space of a moment the lights and the shadows would be all confounded. Then it was that to the unhinged toper and the twittering child, a huge bulk of blackness seemed to sweep down, to pass them close by as they stood upon the bridge, and to vanish on the farther side in the general darkness of the night. "Plainly the devil come for

Mr. Thomson!" thought the child. What Mr. Thomson thought himself, we have no ground of knowledge; but he fell upon his knees in the midst of the bridge like a man praying. On the rest of the journey to the manse, history is silent; but when they came to the door, the poor caitiff, taking the lantern from the child, looked upon her with so lost a countenance that her little courage died within her, and she fled home screaming to her parents. Not a soul would venture out; all that night the minister dwelt alone with his terrors in the manse; and when the day dawned, and men made bold to go about the streets, they found the devil had come indeed for Mr. Thomson.

This manse of Anstruther Easter has another and a more cheerful association. It was early in the morning, about a century before the days of Mr. Thomson, that his predecessor was called out of bed to welcome a Grandee of Spain, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, just landed in the harbour underneath. But sure there was never seen a more decayed grandee; sure there was never a duke welcomed from a stranger place of exile. Half-way between Orkney and Shetland there lies a certain isle; on the one hand the Atlantic, on the other the North Sea, bombard its pillared cliffs; sore-eyed, short-living, inbred fishers and their families herd in its few huts; in the graveyard pieces of wreck-wood stand for monuments; there is nowhere a more inhospitable spot. *Belle-Isle-en-Mer*—Fair-Isle-at-Sea—that is a name that has always rung in my mind's ear like music; but the only "Fair Isle" on which I ever set my foot was this unhomely, rugged turret-top of submarine sierras. Here, when his ship was broken, my lord Duke joyfully got ashore; here for long months he and certain of his men were harboured; and it was from this durance that he landed at last to be welcomed (as well as such a papist deserved, no doubt) by the godly incumbent of Anstruther Easter; and after the Fair Isle, what a fine city must that have appeared! and after the island diet, what a hospitable spot the minister's table! And yet he must have lived on

friendly terms with his outlandish hosts. For to this day there still survives a relic of the long winter evenings when the sailors of the great Armada crouched about the hearths of the Fair-Islanders, the planks of their own lost galleon perhaps lighting up the scene, and the gale and the surf that beat about the coast contributing their melancholy voices. All the folk of the north isles are great artificers of knitting: the Fair-Islanders alone dye their fabrics in the Spanish manner. To this day, gloves and nightcaps, innocently decorated, may be seen for sale in the Shetland warehouse at Edinburgh, or on the Fair Isle itself in the catechist's house; and to this day, they tell the story of the Duke of Medina Sidonia's adventure.

It would seem as if the Fair Isle had some attraction for "persons of quality." When I landed there myself, an elderly gentleman, unshaved, poorly attired, his shoulders wrapped in a plaid, was seen walking to and fro, with a book in his hand, upon the beach. He paid no heed to our arrival, which we thought a strange thing in itself; but when one of the officers of the *Pharos*, passing narrowly by him, observed his book to be a Greek Testament, our wonder and interest took a higher flight. The catechist was cross-examined; he said the gentleman had been put across some time before in Mr. Bruce of Sumburgh's schooner, the only link between the Fair Isle and the rest of the world; and that he held services and was doing "good." So much came glibly enough; but when pressed a little further, the catechist displayed embarrassment. A singular diffidence appeared upon his face: "They tell me," said he, in low tones, "that he's a lord." And a lord he was; a peer of the realm pacing that inhospitable beach with his Greek Testament, and his plaid about his shoulders, set upon doing good, as he understood it, worthy man! And his grandson, a good-looking little boy, much better dressed than the lordly evangelist, and speaking with a silken English accent very foreign to the scene, accompanied me for a while in my exploration of the island. I

suppose this little fellow is now my lord, and wonder how much he remembers of the Fair Isle. Perhaps not much; for he seemed to accept very quietly his savage situation; and under such guidance, it is like that this was not his first nor yet his last adventure.

II

RANDOM MEMORIES

II. THE EDUCATION OF AN ENGINEER

ANSTRUTHER is a place sacred to the Muse ; she inspired (really to a considerable extent) Tennant's vernacular poem " Anster Fair " ; and I have there waited upon her myself with much devotion. This was when I came as a young man to glean engineering experience from the building of the breakwater. What I gleaned, I am sure I do not know ; but indeed I had already my own private determination to be an author ; I loved the art of words and the appearances of life ; and *travellers*, and *headers*, and *rubble*, and *polished ashlar*, and *pierres perdues*, and even the thrilling question of the *string-course*, interested me only (if they interested me at all) as properties for some possible romance or as words to add to my vocabulary. To grow a little catholic is the compensation of years ; youth is one-eyed ; and in those days, though I haunted the breakwater by day, and even loved the place for the sake of the sunshine, the thrilling seaside air, the wash of waves on the sea-face, the green glimmer of the divers' helmets far below, and the musical chinking of the masons, my one genuine preoccupation lay elsewhere, and my only industry was in the hours when I was not on duty. I lodged with a certain Bailie Brown, a carpenter by trade ; and there, as soon as dinner was despatched, in a chamber scented with dry rose-leaves, drew in my chair to the table and proceeded to pour forth literature, at such a speed, and with such intimations of early death and immortality, as I now look back upon with

wonder. Then it was that I wrote "Voces Fidelium," a series of dramatic monologues in verse; then that I indited the bulk of a covenanting novel—like so many others, never finished. Late I sat into the night, toiling (as I thought) under the very dart of death, toiling to leave a memory behind me. I feel moved to thrust aside the curtain of the years, to hail that poor feverish idiot, to bid him go to bed and clap "Voces Fidelium" on the fire before he goes; so clear does he appear before me, sitting there between his candles in the rose-scented room and the late night; so ridiculous a picture (to my elderly wisdom) does the fool present! But he was driven to his bed at last without miraculous intervention; and the manner of his driving sets the last touch upon this eminently youthful business. The weather was then so warm that I must keep the windows open; the night without was populous with moths. As the late darkness deepened, my literary tapers beaconed forth more brightly; thicker and thicker came the dusty night-fliers, to gyrate for one brilliant instant round the flame and fall in agonies upon my paper. Flesh and blood could not endure the spectacle; to capture immortality was doubtless a noble enterprise, but not to capture it at such a cost of suffering; and out would go the candles, and off would I go to bed in the darkness, raging to think that the blow might fall on the morrow, and there was "Voces Fidelium" still incomplete. Well, the moths are all gone, and "Voces Fidelium" along with them; only the fool is still on hand and practises new follies.

Only one thing in connection with the harbour tempted me, and that was the diving, an experience I burned to taste of. But this was not to be, at least in Anstruther; and the subject involves a change of scene to the sub-arctic town of Wick. You can never have dwelt in a country more unsightly than that part of Caithness, the land faintly swelling, faintly falling, not a tree, not a hedgerow, the fields divided by single slate stones set upon their edge, the wind always singing in your ears and (down the

long road that led nowhere) thrumming in the telegraph wires. Only as you approached the coast was there anything to stir the heart. The plateau broke down to the North Sea in formidable cliffs, the tall out-stacks rose like pillars ringed about with surf, the coves were over-brimmed with clamorous froth, the sea-birds screamed, the wind sang in the thyme on the cliff's edge; here and there, small ancient castles toppled on the brim; here and there, it was possible to dip into a dell of shelter, where you might lie and tell yourself you were a little warm, and hear (near at hand) the whin-pods bursting in the afternoon sun, and (farther off) the rumour of the turbulent sea. As for Wick itself, it is one of the meanest of man's towns, and situate certainly on the baldest of God's bays. It lives for herring, and a strange sight it is to see (of an afternoon) the heights of Pulteney blackened by seaward-looking fishers, as when a city crowds to a review—or, as when bees have swarmed, the ground is horrible with lumps and clusters; and a strange sight, and a beautiful, to see the fleet put silently out against a rising moon, the sea-line rough as a wood with sails, and ever and again and one after another, a boat flitting swiftly by the silver disk. This mass of fishers, this great fleet of boats, is out of all proportion to the town itself; and the oars are manned and the nets hauled by immigrants from the Long Island (as we call the outer Hebrides), who come for that season only, and depart again, if "the take" be poor, leaving debts behind them. In a bad year, the end of the herring-fishery is therefore an exciting time; fights are common, riots often possible; an apple knocked from a child's hand was once the signal for something like a war; and even when I was there, a gunboat lay in the bay to assist the authorities. To contrary interests, it should be observed, the curse of Babel is here added; the Lews men are Gaelic speakers, those of Caithness have adopted English; an odd circumstance, if you reflect that both must be largely Norsemen by descent. I remember seeing one of the strongest instances of this division: a

thing like a Punch-and-Judy box erected on the flat gravestones of the churchyard ; from the hutch or proscenium—I know not what to call it—an eldritch-looking preacher laying down the law in Gaelic about some one of the name of *Powl*, whom I at last divined to be the apostle to the Gentiles ; a large congregation of the Lews men very devoutly listening ; and on the outskirts of the crowd, some of the town's children (to whom the whole affair was Greek and Hebrew) profanely playing tigg. The same descent, the same country, the same narrow sect of the same religion, and all these bonds made very largely nugatory by an accidental difference of dialect !

Into the bay of Wick stretched the dark length of the unfinished breakwater, in its cage of open staging ; the travellers (like frames of churches) over-plumbing all ; and away at the extreme end, the divers toiling unseen on the foundation. On a platform of loose planks, the assistants turned their air-mills ; a stone might be swinging between wind and water ; underneath the swell ran gaily ; and from time to time, a mailed dragon with a window-glass snout came dripping up the ladder. Youth is a blessed season after all ; my stay at Wick was in the year of " Voces Fidelium " and the rose-leaf room at Bailie Brown's ; and already I did not care two straws for literary glory. Posthumous ambition perhaps requires an atmosphere of roses ; and the more rugged excitant of Wick east winds had made another boy of me. To go down in the diving-dress, that was my absorbing fancy ; and with the countenance of a certain handsome scamp of a diver, Bob Bain by name, I gratified the whim.

It was grey, harsh, easterly weather, the swell ran pretty high, and out in the open there were " skipper's daughters," when I found myself at last on the diver's platform, twenty pounds of lead upon each foot and my whole person swollen with ply and ply of woollen underclothing. One moment, the salt wind was whistling round my night-capped head ; the next, I was crushed almost double under the weight of

the helmet. As that intolerable burthen was laid upon me, I could have found it in my heart (only for shame's sake) to cry off from the whole enterprise. But it was too late. The attendants began to turn the hurdy-gurdy, and the air to whistle through the tube ; some one screwed in the barred window of the vizor ; and I was cut off in a moment from my fellow-men ; standing there in their midst, but quite divorced from intercourse : a creature deaf and dumb, pathetically looking forth upon them from a climate of his own. Except that I could move and feel, I was like a man fallen in a catalepsy. But time was scarce given me to realise my isolation ; the weights were hung upon my back and breast, the signal-rope was thrust into my unresisting hand ; and setting a twenty-pound foot upon the ladder, I began ponderously to descend.

Some twenty rounds below the platform, twilight fell. Looking up, I saw a low green heaven mottled with vanishing bells of white ; looking around, except for the weedy spokes and shafts of the ladder, nothing but a green gloaming, somewhat opaque but very restful and delicious. Thirty rounds lower, I stepped off on the *pierres perdues* of the foundation ; a dumb helmeted figure took me by the hand, and made a gesture (as I read it) of encouragement ; and looking in at the creature's window, I beheld the face of Bain. There we were, hand to hand and (when it pleased us) eye to eye ; and either might have burst himself with shouting, and not a whisper come to his companion's hearing. Each, in his own little world of air, stood incommunicably separate.

Bob had told me ere this a little tale, a five minutes' drama at the bottom of the sea, which at that moment possibly shot across my mind. He was down with another, settling a stone of the sea-wall. They had it well adjusted, Bob gave the signal, the scissors were slipped, the stone set home ; and it was time to turn to something else. But still his companion remained bowed over the block like a mourner on a tomb, or only raised himself to make absurd

contortions and mysterious signs unknown to the vocabulary of the diver. There, then, these two stood for a while, like the dead and the living ; till there flashed a fortunate thought into Bob's mind, and he stooped, peered through the window of that other world, and beheld the face of its inhabitant wet with streaming tears. Ah ! the man was in pain ! And Bob, glancing downward, saw what was the trouble : the block had been lowered on the foot of that unfortunate—he was caught alive at the bottom of the sea under fifteen tons of rock.

That two men should handle a stone so heavy, even swinging in the scissors, may appear strange to the inexpert. These must bear in mind the great density of the water of the sea, and the surprising results of transplantation to that medium. To understand a little what these are, and how a man's weight, so far from being an encumbrance, is the very ground of his agility, was the chief lesson of my submarine experience. The knowledge came upon me by degrees. As I began to go forward with the hand of my estranged companion, a world of tumbled stones was visible, pillared with the weedy uprights of the staging : overhead, a flat roof of green : a little in front, the sea-wall, like an unfinished rampart. And presently in our upward progress, Bob motioned me to leap upon a stone ; I looked to see if he were possibly in earnest, and he only signed to me the more imperiously. Now the block stood six feet high ; it would have been quite a leap to me unencumbered ; with the breast and back weights, and the twenty pounds upon each foot, and the staggering load of the helmet, the thing was out of reason. I laughed aloud in my tomb ; and to prove to Bob how far he was astray, I gave a little impulse from my toes. Up I soared like a bird, my companion soaring at my side. As high as to the stone, and then higher, I pursued my impotent and empty flight. Even when the strong arm of Bob had checked my shoulders, my heels continued their ascent ; so that I blew out side-ways like an autumn leaf, and must

be hauled in, hand over hand, as sailors haul in the slack of a sail, and propped upon my feet again like an intoxicated sparrow. Yet a little higher on the foundation, and we began to be affected by the bottom of the swell, running there like a strong breeze of wind. Or so I must suppose ; for, safe in my cushion of air, I was conscious of no impact ; only swayed idly like a weed, and was now borne helplessly abroad, and now swiftly—and yet with dream-like gentleness—impelled against my guide. So does a child's balloon divagate upon the currents of the air, and touch and slide off again from every obstacle. So must have ineffectually swung, so resented their inefficiency, those light crowds that followed the Star of Hades, and uttered exiguous voices in the land beyond Cocytus.

There was something strangely exasperating, as well as strangely wearying, in these uncommanded evolutions. It is bitter to return to infancy, to be supported, and directed, and perpetually set upon your feet, by the hand of some one else. The air besides, as it is supplied to you by the busy millers on the platform, closes the eustachian tubes and keeps the neophyte perpetually swallowing, till his throat is grown so dry that he can swallow no longer. And for all these reasons—although I had a fine, dizzy, muddle-headed joy in my surroundings, and longed, and tried, and always failed, to lay hands on the fish that darted here and there about me, swift as humming-birds—yet I fancy I was rather relieved than otherwise when Bain brought me back to the ladder and signed to me to mount. And there was one more experience before me even then. Of a sudden, my ascending head passed into the trough of a swell. Out of the green, I shot at once into a glory of rosy, almost of sanguine light—the multitudinous seas incarnadined, the heaven above a vault of crimson. And then the glory faded into the hard, ugly daylight of a Caithness autumn, with a low sky, a grey sea, and a whistling wind.

Bob Bain had five shillings for his trouble, and I had done what I desired. It was one of the best things I got

from my education as an engineer: of which, however, as a way of life, I wish to speak with sympathy. It takes a man into the open air; it keeps him hanging about harbour-sides, which is the richest form of idling; it carries him to wild islands; it gives him a taste of the genial dangers of the sea; it supplies him with dexterities to exercise; it makes demands upon his ingenuity; it will go far to cure him of any taste (if ever he had one) for the miserable life of cities. And when it has done so, it carries him back and shuts him in an office! From the roaring skerry and the wet thwart of the tossing boat, he passes to the stool and desk, and with a memory full of ships, and seas, and perilous headlands, and the shining pharos, he must apply his long-sighted eyes to the pretty niceties of drawing, or measure his inaccurate mind with several pages of consecutive figures. He is a wise youth, to be sure, who can balance one part of genuine life against two parts of drudgery between four walls, and for the sake of the one, manfully accept the other.

Wick was scarce an eligible place of stay. But how much better it was to hang in the cold wind upon the pier, to go down with Bob Bain among the roots of the staging, to be all day in a boat coiling a wet rope and shouting orders—not always very wise—than to be warm and dry, and dull, and dead-alive, in the most comfortable office. And Wick itself had in those days a note of originality. It may have still, but I misdoubt it much. The old minister of Keiss would not preach, in these degenerate times, for an hour and a half upon the clock. The gipsies must be gone from their cavern; where you might see, from the mouth, the women tending their fire, like Meg Merrilies, and the men sleeping off their coarse potations; and where in winter gales, the surf would beleaguer them closely, bursting in their very door. A traveller to-day upon the Thurso coach would scarce observe a little cloud of smoke among the moorlands, and be told, quite openly, it marked a private still. He would not indeed make that

journey, for there is now no Thurso coach. And even if he could, one little thing that happened to me could never happen to him, or not with the same trenchancy of contrast.

We had been upon the road all evening; the coach-top was crowded with Lews fishers going home, scarce anything but Gaelic had sounded in my ears; and our way had lain throughout over a moorish country very northern to behold. Latish at night, though it was still broad day in our sub-arctic latitude, we came down upon the shores of the roaring Pentland Firth, that grave of mariners; on one hand, the cliffs of Dunnet Head ran seaward; in front was the little bare white town of Castleton, its streets full of blowing sand; nothing beyond, but the North Islands, the great deep, and the perennial ice-fields of the Pole. And here, in the last imaginable place, there sprang up young outlandish voices and a chatter of some foreign speech; and I saw, pursuing the coach with its load of Hebridean fishers—as they had pursued *vetturini* up the passes of the Apennines or perhaps along the grotto under Virgil's tomb—two little dark-eyed, white-toothed Italian vagabonds, of twelve to fourteen years of age, one with a hurdy-gurdy, the other with a cage of white mice. The coach passed on, and their small Italian chatter died in the distance; and I was left to marvel how they had wandered into that country, and how they fared in it, and what they thought of it, and when (if ever) they should see again the silver wind-breaks run among the olives, and the stone-pine stand guard upon Etruscan sepulchres.

Upon any American, the strangeness of this incident is somewhat lost. For as far back as he goes in his own land, he will find some alien camping there; the Cornish miner, the French or Mexican half-blood, the negro in the South, these are deep in the woods and far among the mountains. But in an old, cold, and rugged country such as mine, the days of immigration are long at an end; and away up there, which was at that time far beyond the northernmost extreme of railways, hard upon the shore of that ill-omened

strait of whirlpools, in a land of moors where no stranger came, unless it should be a sportsman to shoot grouse or an antiquary to decipher runes, the presence of these small pedestrians struck the mind as though a bird-of-paradise had risen from the heather or an albatross come fishing in the bay of Wick. They were as strange to their surroundings as my lordly evangelist or the old Spanish grandee on the Fair Isle.

III

A CHAPTER ON DREAMS

The past is all of one texture—whether feigned or suffered —whether acted out in three dimensions, or only witnessed in that small theatre of the brain which we keep brightly lighted all night long, after the jets are down, and darkness and sleep reign undisturbed in the remainder of the body. There is no distinction on the face of our experiences ; one is vivid indeed, and one dull, and one pleasant, and another agonising to remember ; but which of them is what we call true, and which a dream, there is not one hair to prove. The past stands on a precarious footing ; another straw split in the field of metaphysic, and behold us robbed of it. There is scarce a family that can count four generations but lays a claim to some dormant title or some castle and estate : a claim not prosecutable in any court of law, but flattering to the fancy and a great alleviation of idle hours. A man's claim to his own past is yet less valid. A paper might turn up (in proper story-book fashion) in the secret drawer of an old ebony secretary, and restore your family to its ancient honours and reinstate mine in a certain West Indian islet (not far from St. Kitt's, as beloved tradition hummed in my young ears) which was once ours, and is now unjustly some one else's, and for that matter (in the state of the sugar trade) is not worth anything to anybody. I do not say that these revolutions are likely ; only no man can deny that they are possible ; and the past, on the other hand, is lost for ever : our old days and deeds, our old selves, too, and the very world in which these scenes were acted, all brought down to the same faint residuum

as a last night's dream, to some incontinuous images, and an echo in the chambers of the brain. Not an hour, not a mood, not a glance of the eye, can we revoke ; it is all gone, past conjuring. And yet conceive us robbed of it, conceive that little thread of memory that we trail behind us broken at the pocket's edge ; and in what naked nullity should we be left ! for we only guide ourselves, and only know ourselves, by these air-painted pictures of the past.

Upon these grounds, there are some among us who claim to have lived longer and more richly than their neighbours ; when they lay asleep they claim they were still active ; and among the treasures of memory that all men review for their amusement, these count in no second place the harvests of their dreams. There is one of this kind whom I have in my eye, and whose case is perhaps unusual enough to be described. He was from a child an ardent and uncomfortable dreamer. When he had a touch of fever at night, and the room swelled and shrank, and his clothes, hanging on a nail, now loomed up instant to the bigness of a church, and now drew away into a horror of infinite distance and infinite littleness, the poor soul was very well aware of what must follow, and struggled hard against the approaches of that slumber which was the beginning of sorrows. But his struggles were in vain ; sooner or later the night-hag would have him by the throat, and pluck him, strangling and screaming, from his sleep. His dreams were at times commonplace enough, at times very strange : at times they were almost formless, he would be haunted, for instance, by nothing more definite than a certain hue of brown, which he did not mind in the least while he was awake, but feared and loathed while he was dreaming ; at times, again, they took on every detail of circumstance, as when once he supposed he must swallow the populous world, and awoke screaming with the horror of the thought. The two chief troubles of his very narrow existence—the practical and everyday trouble of school tasks and the ultimate and airy one of hell and judgment—were often

confounded together into one appalling nightmare. He seemed to himself to stand before the Great White Throne; he was called on, poor little devil, to recite some form of words, on which his destiny depended; his tongue stuck, his memory was blank, hell gaped for him; and he would awake, clinging to the curtain-rod with his knees to his chin.

These were extremely poor experiences, on the whole; and at that time of life my dreamer would have very willingly parted with his power of dreams. But presently, in the course of his growth, the cries and physical contortions passed away, seemingly for ever; his visions were still for the most part miserable, but they were more constantly supported; and he would awake with no more extreme symptom than a flying heart, a freezing scalp, cold sweats, and the speechless midnight fear. His dreams, too, as befitted a mind better stocked with particulars, became more circumstantial, and had more the air and continuity of life. The look of the world beginning to take hold on his attention, scenery came to play a part in his sleeping as well as in his waking thoughts, so that he would take long, uneventful journeys and see strange towns and beautiful places as he lay in bed. And, what is more significant, an odd taste that he had for the Georgian costume and for stories laid in that period of English history, began to rule the features of his dreams; so that he masqueraded there in a three-cornered hat, and was much engaged with Jacobite conspiracy between the hour for bed and that for breakfast. About the same time, he began to read in his dreams—tales, for the most part, and for the most part after the manner of G. P. R. James, but so incredibly more vivid and moving than any printed book, that he has ever since been malcontent with literature.

And then, while he was yet a student, there came to him a dream-adventure which he has no anxiety to repeat; he began, that is to say, to dream in sequence and thus to

lead a double life—one of the day, one of the night—one that he had every reason to believe was the true one, another that he had no means of proving to be false. I should have said he studied, or was by way of studying, at Edinburgh College, which (it may be supposed) was how I came to know him. Well, in his dream-life he passed a long day in the surgical theatre, his heart in his mouth, his teeth on edge, seeing monstrous malformations and the abhorred dexterity of surgeons. In a heavy, rainy, foggy evening he came forth into the South Bridge, turned up the High Street, and entered the door of a tall *land*, at the top of which he supposed himself to lodge. All night long, in his wet clothes, he climbed the stairs, stair after stair in endless series, and at every second flight a flaring lamp with a reflector. All night long he brushed by single persons passing downward—beggarly women of the street, great, weary, muddy labourers, poor scarecrows of men, pale parodies of women—but all drowsy and weary like himself, and all single, and all brushing against him as they passed. In the end, out of a northern window, he would see day beginning to whiten over the Firth, give up the ascent, turn to descend, and in a breath be back again upon the streets, in his wet clothes, in the wet, haggard dawn, trudging to another day of monstrosities and operations. Time went quicker in the life of dreams, some seven hours (as near as he can guess) to one ; and it went, besides. more intensely, so that the gloom of these fancied experiences clouded the day, and he had not shaken off their shadow ere it was time to lie down and to renew them. I cannot tell how long it was that he endured this discipline ; but it was long enough to leave a great black blot upon his memory, long enough to send him, trembling for his reason, to the doors of a certain doctor ; whereupon with a simple draught he was restored to the common lot of man.

The poor gentleman has since been troubled by nothing of the sort ; indeed, his nights were for some while like other men's, now banlk, now chequered with dreams, and

these sometimes charming, sometimes appalling, but except for an occasional vividness, of no extraordinary kind. I will just note one of these occasions, ere I pass on to what makes my dreamer truly interesting. It seemed to him that he was in the first floor of a rough hill-farm. The room showed some poor efforts at gentility, a carpet on the floor, a piano, I think, against the wall; but, for all these refinements, there was no mistaking he was in a moorland place, among hillside people, and set in miles of heather. He looked down from the window upon a bare farmyard, that seemed to have been long disused. A great, uneasy stillness lay upon the world. There was no sign of the farm-folk or of any live stock, save for an old, brown, curly dog of the retriever breed, who sat close in against the wall of the house and seemed to be dozing. Something about this dog disquieted the dreamer; it was quite a nameless feeling, for the beast looked right enough —indeed, he was so old and dull and dusty and broken-down, that he should rather have awakened pity; and yet the conviction came and grew upon the dreamer that this was no proper dog at all, but something hellish. A great many dozing summer flies hummed about the yard; and presently the dog thrust forth his paw, caught a fly in his open palm, carried it to his mouth like an ape, and looking suddenly up at the dreamer in the window, winked to him with one eye. The dream went on, it matters not how it went; it was a good dream as dreams go; but there was nothing in the sequel worthy of that devilish brown dog. And the point of interest for me lies partly in that very fact: that having found so singular an incident, my imperfect dreamer should prove unable to carry the tale to a fit end and fall back on indescribable noises and indiscriminate horrors. It would be different now; he knows his business better!

For, to approach at last the point: This honest fellow had long been in the custom of setting himself to sleep with tales, and so had his father before him; but these were

irresponsible inventions, told for the teller's pleasure, with no eye to the crass public or the thwart reviewer: tales where a thread might be dropped, or one adventure quitted for another, on fancy's least suggestion. So that the little people who manage man's internal theatre had not as yet received a very rigorous training; and played upon their stage like children who should have slipped into the house and found it empty, rather than like drilled actors performing a set piece to a huge hall of faces. But presently my dreamer began to turn his former amusement of story-telling to (what is called) account; by which I mean that he began to write and sell his tales. Here was he, and here were the little people who did that part of his business, in quite new conditions. The stories must now be trimmed and pared and set upon all-fours, they must run from a beginning to an end and fit (after a manner) with the laws of life; the pleasure, in one word, had become a business; and that not only for the dreamer, but for the little people of his theatre. These understood the change as well as he. When he lay down to prepare himself for sleep, he no longer sought amusement, but printable and profitable tales; and after he had dozed off in his box-seat, his little people continued their evolutions with the same mercantile designs. All other forms of dream deserted him but two: he still occasionally reads the most delightful books, he still visits at times the most delightful places; and it is perhaps worthy of note that to these same places, and to one in particular, he returns at intervals of months and years, finding new field-paths, visiting new neighbours, beholding that happy valley under new effects of noon and dawn and sunset. But all the rest of the family of visions is quite lost to him: the common, mangled version of yesterday's affairs, the raw-head-and-bloody-bones nightmare, rumoured to be the child of toasted cheese—these and their like are gone; and, for the most part, whether awake or asleep, he is simply occupied—he or his little people—in consciously making stories for the market.

This dreamer (like many other persons) has encountered some trifling vicissitudes of fortune. When the bank begins to send letters and the butcher to linger at the back gate, he sets to belabouring his brains after a story, for that is his readiest money-winner; and, behold! at once the little people begin to bestir themselves in the same quest, and labour all night long, and all night long set before him truncheons of tales upon their lighted theatre. No fear of his being frightened now; the flying heart and the frozen scalp are things bygone; applause, growing applause, growing interest, growing exultation in his own cleverness (for he takes all the credit), and at last a jubilant leap to wakefulness, with the cry, "I have it, that'll do!" upon his lips: with such and similar emotions he sits at these nocturnal dramas, with such outbreaks, like Claudius in the play, he scatters the performance in the midst. Often enough the waking is a disappointment: he has been too deep asleep, as I explain the thing; drowsiness has gained his little people, they have gone stumbling and maundering through their parts; and the play, to the awakened mind, is seen to be a tissue of absurdities. And yet how often have these sleepless Brownies done him honest service, and given him, as he sat idly taking his pleasure in the boxes, better tales than he could fashion for himself.

Here is one, exactly as it came to him. It seemed he was the son of a very rich and wicked man, the owner of broad acres and a most damnable temper. The dreamer (and that was the son) had lived much abroad, on purpose to avoid his parent; and when at length he returned to England, it was to find him married again to a young wife, who was supposed to suffer cruelly and to loathe her yoke. Because of this marriage (as the dreamer indistinctly understood) it was desirable for father and son to have a meeting; and yet both being proud and both angry, neither would condescend upon a visit. Meet they did accordingly, in a desolate, sandy country by the sea; and

there they quarrelled, and the son, stung by some intolerable insult, struck down the father dead. No suspicion was aroused ; the dead man was found and buried, and the dreamer succeeded to the broad estates, and found himself installed under the same roof with his father's widow, for whom no provision had been made. These two lived very much alone, as people may after a bereavement, sat down to table together, shared the long evenings, and grew daily better friends ; until it seemed to him of a sudden that she was prying about dangerous matters, that she had conceived a notion of his guilt, that she watched him and tried him with questions. He drew back from her company as men draw back from a precipice suddenly discovered ; and yet so strong was the attraction that he would drift again and again into the old intimacy, and again and again be startled back by some suggestive question or some inexplicable meaning in her eye. So they lived at cross purposes, a life full of broken dialogue, challenging glances, and suppressed passion ; until, one day, he saw the woman slipping from the house in a veil, followed her to the station, followed her in the train to the seaside country, and out over the sandhills to the very place where the murder was done. There she began to grope among the bents, he watching her, flat upon his face ; and presently she had something in her hand—I cannot remember what it was, but it was deadly evidence against the dreamer —and as she held it up to look at it, perhaps from the shock of the discovery, her foot slipped, and she hung at some peril on the brink of the tall sand-wreaths. He had no thought but to spring up and rescue her ; and there they stood face to face, she with that deadly matter openly in her hand—his very presence on the spot another link of proof. It was plain she was about to speak, but this was more than he could bear—he could bear to be lost, but not to talk of it with his destroyer ; and he cut her short with trivial conversation. Arm in arm, they returned together to the train, talking he knew not what, made the

journey back in the same carriage, sat down to dinner, and passed the evening in the drawing-room as in the past. But suspense and fear drummed in the dreamer's bosom. "She has not denounced me yet"—so his thoughts ran: "when will she denounce me? Will it be to-morrow?" And it was not to-morrow, nor the next day, nor the next; and their life settled back on the old terms, only that she seemed kinder than before, and that, as for him, the burthen of his suspense and wonder grew daily more unbearable, so that he wasted away like a man with a disease. Once, indeed, he broke all bounds of decency, seized an occasion when she was abroad, ransacked her room, and at last, hidden away among her jewels, found the damning evidence. There he stood, holding this thing, which was his life, in the hollow of his hand, and marvelling at her inconsequent behaviour, that she should seek, and keep, and yet not use it; and then the door opened, and behold herself. So, once more, they stood, eye to eye, with the evidence between them; and once more she raised to him a face brimming with some communication; and once more he shied away from speech and cut her off. But before he left the room, which he had turned upside down, he laid back his death-warrant where he had found it; and at that, her face lighted up. The next thing he heard, she was explaining to her maid, with some ingenious falsehood, the disorder of her things. Flesh and blood could bear the strain no longer; and I think it was the next morning (though chronology is always hazy in the theatre of the mind) that he burst from his reserve. They had been breakfasting together in one corner of a great, parqueted, sparely-furnished room of many windows; all the time of the meal she had tortured him with sly allusions; and no sooner were the servants gone, and these two protagonists alone together, than he leaped to his feet. She too sprang up, with a pale face; with a pale face, she heard him as he raved out his complaint: Why did she torture him so? she knew all, she knew he was no enemy to her; why did

she not denounce him at once ? what signified her whole behaviour ? why did she torture him ? and yet again, why did she torture him ? And when he had done, she fell upon her knees, and with outstretched hands : " Do you not understand ? " she cried. " I love you ! "

Hereupon, with a pang of wonder and mercantile delight the dreamer awoke. His mercantile delight was not of long endurance ; for it soon became plain that in this spirited tale there were unmarketable elements ; which is just the reason why you have it here so briefly told. But his wonder has still kept growing ; and I think the reader's will also, if he consider it ripely. For now he sees why I speak of the little people as of substantive inventors and performers. To the end they had kept their secret. I will go bail for the dreamer (having excellent grounds for valuing his candour) that he had no guess whatever at the motive of the woman—the hinge of the whole well-invented plot—until the instant of that highly dramatic declaration. It was not his tale ; it was the little people's ! And observe : not only was the secret kept, the story was told with really guileful craftsmanship. The conduct of both actors is (in the cant phrase) psychologically correct, and the emotion aptly graduated up to the surprising climax. I am awake now, and I know this trade ; and yet I cannot better it. I am awake, and I live by this business ; and yet I could not outdo—could not perhaps equal—that crafty artifice (as of some old, experienced carpenter of plays, some Dennery or Sardou) by which the same situation is twice presented and the two actors twice brought face to face over the evidence, only once it is in her hand, once in his—and these in their due order, the least dramatic first. The more I think of it, the more I am moved to press upon the world my question : Who are the Little People ? They are near connections of the dreamer's, beyond doubt ; they share in his financial worries and have an eye to the bank-book ; they share plainly in his training ; they have plainly learned like him to build the scheme of a considerate story and to

arrange emotion in progressive order ; only I think they have more talent ; and one thing is beyond doubt, they can tell him a story piece by piece, like a serial, and keep him all the while in ignorance of where they aim. Who are they, then ? and who is the dreamer ?

Well, as regards the dreamer, I can answer that, for he is no less a person than myself ;—as I might have told you from the beginning, only that the critics murmur over my consistent egotism ;—and as I am positively forced to tell you now, or I could advance but little further with my story. And for the Little People, what shall I say they are but just my Brownies, God bless them ! who do one-half my work for me while I am fast asleep, and in all human likelihood, do the rest for me as well, when I am wide awake and fondly suppose I do it for myself. That part which is done while I am sleeping is the Brownies' part beyond contention ; but that which is done when I am up and about is by no means necessarily mine, since all goes to show the Brownies have a hand in it even then. Here is a doubt that much concerns my conscience. For myself —what I call I, my conscious ego, the denizen of the pineal gland unless he has changed his residence since Descartes, the man with the conscience and the variable bank-account, the man with the hat and the boots, and the privilege of voting and not carrying his candidate at the general elections —I am sometimes tempted to suppose is no story-teller at all, but a creature as matter of fact as any cheesemonger or any cheese, and a realist bemired up to the ears in actuality ; so that, by that account, the whole of my published fiction should be the single-handed product of some Brownie, some Familiar, some unseen collaborator, whom I keep locked in a back garret, while I get all the praise and he but a share (which I cannot prevent him getting) of the pudding. I am an excellent adviser, something like Molière's servant. I pull back and I cut down ; and I dress the whole in the best words and sentences that I can find and make ; I hold the pen, too ; and I do the sitting at the table,

which is about the worst of it; and when all is done, I make up the manuscript and pay for the registration; so that, on the whole, I have some claim to share, though not so largely as I do, in the profits of our common enterprise.

I can but give an instance or so of what part is done sleeping and what part awake, and leave the reader to share what laurels there are, at his own nod, between myself and my collaborators; and to do this I will first take a book that a number of persons have been polite enough to read, "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." I had long been trying to write a story on this subject, to find a body, a vehicle, for that strong sense of man's double being which must at times come in upon and overwhelm the mind of every thinking creature. I had even written one, "The Travelling Companion," which was returned by an editor on the plea that it was a work of genius and indecent, and which I burned the other day on the ground that it was not a work of genius, and that "Jekyll" had supplanted it. Then came one of those financial fluctuations to which (with an elegant modesty) I have hitherto referred in the third person. For two days I went about racking my brains for a plot of any sort; and on the second night I dreamed the scene at the window, and a scene afterward split in two, in which Hyde, pursued for some crime, took the powder and underwent the change in the presence of his pursuers. All the rest was made awake, and consciously, although I think I can trace in much of it the manner of my Brownies. The meaning of the tale is therefore mine, and had long pre-existed in my garden of Adonis, and tried one body after another in vain; indeed, I do most of the morality, worse luck! and my Brownies have not a rudiment of what we call a conscience. Mine, too, is the setting, mine the characters. All that was given me was the matter of three scenes, and the central idea of a voluntary change becoming involuntary. Will it be thought ungenerous, after I have been so liberally ladling out praise to my unseen collaborators, if I here toss them over, bound hand and

foot, into the arena of the critics? For the business of the powders, which so many have censured, is, I am relieved to say, not mine at all, but the Brownies'. Of another tale, in case the reader should have glanced at it, I may say a word: the not very defensible story of "Olalla." Here the court, the mother, the mother's niche, Olalla, Olalla's chamber, the meetings on the stair, the broken window, the ugly scene of the bite, were all given me in bulk and detail as I have tried to write them; to this I added only the external scenery (for in my dream I never was beyond the court), the portrait, the characters of Felipe and the priest, the moral, such as it is, and the last pages, such as, alas! they are. And I may even say that in this case the moral itself was given me; for it arose immediately on a comparison of the mother and the daughter, and from the hideous trick of atavism in the first. Sometimes a parabolic sense is still more undeniably present in a dream; sometimes I cannot but suppose my Brownies have been aping Bunyan, and yet in no case with what would possibly be called a moral in a tract; never with the ethical narrowness; conveying hints instead of life's larger limitations and that sort of sense which we seem to perceive in the arabesque of time and space.

For the most part, it will be seen, my Brownies are somewhat fantastic, like their stories hot and hot, full of passion and the picturesque, alive with animating incident; and they have no prejudice against the supernatural. But the other day they gave me a surprise, entertaining me with a love-story, a little April comedy, which I ought certainly to hand over to the author of "A Chance Acquaintance," for he could write it as it should be written, and I am sure (although I mean to try) that I cannot.—But who would have supposed that a Brownie of mine should invent a tale for Mr. Howells?

IV

BEGGARS

I

In a pleasant, airy, up-hill country, it was my fortune when I was young to make the acquaintance of a certain beggar. I call him beggar, though he usually allowed his coat and his shoes (which were open-mouthed, indeed) to beg for him. He was the wreck of an athletic man, tall, gaunt, and bronzed ; far gone in consumption, with that disquieting smile of the mortally stricken on his face ; but still active afoot, still with the brisk military carriage, the ready military salute. Three ways led through this piece of country ; and as I was inconstant in my choice, I believe he must often have awaited me in vain. But often enough, he caught me ; often enough, from some place of ambush by the roadside, he would spring suddenly forth in the regulation attitude, and launching at once into his inconsequential talk, fall into step with me upon my farther course. "A fine morning, sir, though perhaps a trifle inclining to rain. I hope I see you well, sir. Why, no, sir, I don't feel as hearty myself as I could wish, but I am keeping about my ordinary. I am pleased to meet you on the road, sir. I assure you I quite look forward to one of our little conversations." He loved the sound of his own voice inordinately, and though (with something too off-hand to call servility) he would always hasten to agree with anything you said, yet he could never suffer you to say it to an end. By what transition he slid to his favourite subject I have no memory ; but we had never been long together

on the way before he was dealing, in a very military manner, with the English poets. "Shelley was a fine poet, sir, though a trifle atheistical in his opinions. His 'Queen Mab,' sir, is quite an atheistical work. Scott, sir, is not so poetical a writer. With the works of Shakespeare I am not so well acquainted, but he was a fine poet. Keats—John Keats, sir—he was a very fine poet." With such references, such trivial criticism, such loving parade of his own knowledge, he would beguile the road, striding forward up-hill, his staff now clapped to the ribs of his deep, resonant chest, now swinging in the air with the remembered jauntiness of the private soldier; and all the while his toes looking out of his boots, and his shirt looking out of his elbows, and death looking out of his smile, and his big, crazy frame shaken by accesses of cough.

He would often go the whole way home with me: often to borrow a book, and that book always a poet. Off he would march, to continue his mendicant rounds, with the volume slipped into the pocket of his ragged coat; and although he would sometimes keep it quite a while, yet it came always back again at last, not much the worse for its travels into beggardom. And in this way, doubtless, his knowledge grew and his glib, random criticism took a wider range. But my library was not the first he had drawn upon: at our first encounter, he was already brimful of Shelley and the atheistical "Queen Mab," and "Keats—John Keats, sir." And I have often wondered how he came by these acquirements, just as I often wondered how he fell to be a beggar. He had served through the Mutiny—of which (like so many people) he could tell practically nothing beyond the names of places, and that it was "difficult work, sir," and very hot, or that so-and-so was "a very fine commander, sir." He was far too smart a man to have remained a private; in the nature of things, he must have won his stripes. And yet here he was, without a pension. When I touched on this problem, he would content himself with diffidently offering me advice. "A

man should be very careful when he is young, sir. If you'll excuse me saying so, a spirited young gentleman like yourself, sir, should be very careful. I was perhaps a trifle inclined to atheistical opinions myself." For (perhaps with a deeper wisdom than we are inclined in these days to admit) he plainly bracketed agnosticism with beer and skittles.

Keats—John Keats, sir—and Shelley were his favourite bards. I cannot remember if I tried him with Rossetti; but I know his taste to a hair, and if ever I did, he must have doted on that author. What took him was a richness in the speech; he loved the exotic, the unexpected word; the moving cadence of a phrase; a vague sense of emotion (about nothing) in the very letters of the alphabet: the romance of language. His honest head was very nearly empty, his intellect like a child's; and when he read his favourite authors, he can almost never have understood what he was reading. Yet the taste was not only genuine, it was exclusive; I tried in vain to offer him novels; he would none of them, he cared for nothing but romantic language that he could not understand. The case may be commoner than we suppose. I am reminded of a lad who was laid in the next cot to a friend of mine in a public hospital, and who was no sooner installed than he sent out (perhaps with his last pence) for a cheap Shakespeare. My friend pricked up his ears; fell at once in talk with his new neighbour, and was ready, when the book arrived, to make a singular discovery. For this lover of great literature understood not one sentence out of twelve, and his favourite part was that of which he understood the least—the inimitable, mouth-filling rodomontade of the ghost in *Hamlet*. It was a bright day in hospital when my friend expounded the sense of this beloved jargon: a task for which I am willing to believe my friend was very fit, though I can never regard it as an easy one. I know indeed a point or two, on which I would gladly question Mr. Shakespeare, that lover of big words, could he revisit the glimpses of the moon, or could I myself climb backward to the

spacious days of Elizabeth. But, in the second case, I should most likely pretermit these questionings, and take my place instead in the pit at the Blackfriars, to hear the actor in his favourite part, playing up to Mr. Burbage, and rolling out—as I seem to hear him—with a ponderous gusto—

" Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd."

What a pleasant chance, if we could go there in a party ! and what a surprise for Mr. Burbage, when the ghost received the honours of the evening !

As for my old soldier, like Mr. Burbage and Mr. Shakespeare, he is long since dead ; and now lies buried, I suppose, and nameless and quite forgotten, in some poor city graveyard.—But not for me, you brave heart, have you been buried ! For me, you are still afoot, tasting the sun and air, and striding southward. By the groves of Comiston and beside the Hermitage of Braid, by the Hunters' Tryst, and where the curlews and plovers cry around Fairmilehead, I see and hear you, stalwartly carrying your deadly sickness, cheerfully discoursing of uncomprehended poets.

II

The thought of the old soldier recalls that of another tramp, his counterpart. This was a little, lean, and fiery man, with the eyes of a dog and the face of a gipsy ; whom I found one morning encamped with his wife and children and his grinder's wheel, beside the burn of Kinnaird. To this beloved dell I went, at that time, daily ; and daily the knife-grinder and I (for as long as his tent continued pleasantly to interrupt my little wilderness) sat on two stones, and smoked, and plucked grass and talked to the tune of the brown water. His children were mere whelps, they fought and bit among the fern like vermin. His wife was a mere squaw ; I saw her gather brush and tend the kettle, but she never ventured to address her lord while I

was present. The tent was a mere gipsy hovel, like a sty for pigs. But the grinder himself had the fine self-sufficiency and grave politeness of the hunter and the savage ; he did me the honours of this dell, which had been mine but the day before, took me far into the secrets of his life, and used me (I am proud to remember) as a friend.

Like my old soldier, he was far gone in the national complaint. Unlike him, he had a vulgar taste in letters ; scarce flying higher than the story papers ; probably finding no difference, certainly seeking none, between Tannahill and Burns ; his noblest thoughts, whether of poetry or music, adequately embodied in that somewhat obvious ditty,

> " Will ye gang, lassie, gang
> To the braes o' Balquhidder " :

—which is indeed apt to echo in the ears of Scottish children, and to him, in view of his experience, must have found a special directness of address. But if he had no fine sense of poetry in letters, he felt with a deep joy the poetry of life. You should have heard him speak of what he loved ; of the tent pitched beside the talking water ; of the stars overhead at night ; of the blest return of morning, the peep of day over the moors, the awaking birds among the birches ; how he abhorred the long winter shut in cities ; and with what delight, at the return of the spring, he once more pitched his camp in the living out-of-doors. But we were a pair of tramps ; and to you, who are doubtless sedentary and a consistent first-class passenger in life, he would scarce have laid himself so open ;—to you, he might have been content to tell his story of a ghost—that of a buccaneer with his pistols as he lived—whom he had once encountered in a seaside cave near Buckie ; and that would have been enough, for that would have shown you the mettle of the man. Here was a piece of experience solidly and livingly built up in words, here was a story created, *teres atque rotundus.*

And to think of the old soldier, that lover of the literary

bards! He had visited stranger spots than any seaside cave; encountered men more terrible than any spirit; done and dared and suffered in that incredible, unsung epic of the Mutiny War; played his part with the field force of Delhi, beleaguering and beleaguered; shared in that enduring, savage anger and contempt of death and decency that, for long months together, bedevil'd and inspired the army; was hurled to and fro in the battle-smoke of the assault; was there, perhaps, where Nicholson fell; was there when the attacking column, with hell upon every side, found the soldier's enemy—strong drink, and the lives of tens of thousands trembled in the scale, and the fate of the flag of England staggered. And of all this he had no more to say than "hot work, sir," or "the army suffered a great deal, sir," or, "I believe General Wilson, sir, was not very highly thought of in the papers." His life was naught to him, the vivid pages of experience quite blank: in words his pleasure lay—melodious, agitated words—printed words, about that which he had never seen and was connatally incapable of comprehending. We have here two temperaments face to face; both untrained, unsophisticated, surprised (we may say) in the egg; both boldly charactered:—that of the artist, the lover and artificer of words; that of the maker, the seeër, the lover and forger of experience. If the one had a daughter and the other had a son, and these married, might not some illustrious writer count descent from the beggar-soldier and the needy knife-grinder?

III

Every one lives by selling something, whatever be his right to it. The burglar sells at the same time his own skill and courage and my silver plate (the whole at the most moderate figure) to a Jew receiver. The bandit sells the traveller an article of prime necessity: that traveller's life. And as for the old soldier, who stands for central mark to

my capricious figures of eight, he dealt in a specialty ; for he was the only beggar in the world who ever gave me pleasure for my money. He had learned a school of manners in the barracks and had the sense to cling to it, accosting strangers with a regimental freedom, thanking patrons with a merely regimental difference, sparing you at once the tragedy of his position and the embarrassment of yours. There was not one hint about him of the beggar's emphasis, the outburst of revolting gratitude, the rant and cant, the " God bless you, Kind, Kind gentleman," which insults the smallness of your alms by disproportionate vehemence, which is so notably false, which would be so unbearable if it were true. I am sometimes tempted to suppose this reading of the beggar's part a survival of the old days when Shakespeare was intoned upon the stage and mourners keened beside the death-bed ; to think that we cannot now accept these strong emotions unless they be uttered in the just note of life ; nor (save in the pulpit) endure these gross conventions. They wound us, I am tempted to say, like mockery ; the high voice of keening (as it yet lingers on) strikes in the face of sorrow like a buffet ; and the rant and cant of the staled beggar stirs in us a shudder of disgust. But the fact disproves these amateur opinions. The beggar lives by his knowledge of the average man. He knows what he is about when he bandages his head, and hires and drugs a babe, and poisons life with " Poor Mary Ann " or " Long, long ago " ; he knows what he is about when he loads the critical ear and sickens the nice conscience with intolerable thanks ; they know what they are about, he and his crew, when they pervade the slums of cities, ghastly parodies of suffering, hateful parodies of gratitude. This trade can scarce be called an imposition ; it has been so blown upon with exposures ; it flaunts its fraudulence so nakedly. We pay them as we pay those who show us, in huge exaggeration, the monsters of our drinking-water ; or those who daily predict the fall of Britain. We pay them for the pain they inflict, pay them, and wince, and hurry on. And truly

there is nothing that can shake the conscience like a beggar's thanks ; and that polity in which such protestations can be purchased for a shilling, seems no scene for an honest man.

Are there, then, we may be asked, no genuine beggars ? And the answer is, Not one. My old soldier was a humbug like the rest ; his ragged boots were, in the stage phrase, properties ; whole boots were given him again and again, and always gladly accepted ; and the next day, there he was on the road as usual, with toes exposed. His boots were his method ; they were the man's trade ; without his boots he would have starved ; he did not live by charity, but by appealing to a gross taste in the public, which loves the limelight on the actor's face, and the toes out of the beggar's boots. There is a true poverty, which no one sees : a false and merely mimetic poverty, which usurps its place and dress, and lives, and above all drinks, on the fruits of the usurpation. The true poverty does not go into the streets ; the banker may rest assured, he has never put a penny in its hand. The self-respecting poor beg from each other ; never from the rich. To live in the frock-coated ranks of life, to hear canting scenes of gratitude rehearsed for twopence, a man might suppose that giving was a thing gone out of fashion ; yet it goes forward on a scale so great as to fill me with surprise. In the houses of the working classes, all day long there will be a foot upon the stair ; all day long there will be a knocking at the doors ; beggars come, beggars go, without stint, hardly with intermission, from morning till night ; and meanwhile, in the same city and but a few streets off, the castles of the rich stand unsummoned. Get the tale of any honest tramp, you will find it was always the poor who helped him ; get the truth from any workman who has met misfortunes, it was always next door that he would go for help, or only with such exceptions as are said to prove a rule ; look at the course of the mimetic beggar, it is through the poor quarters that he trails his passage, showing his bandages to every window, piercing even to the attics with his nasal song. Here is a

remarkable state of things in our Christian commonwealths, that the poor only should be asked to give.

IV

There is a pleasant tale of some worthless, phrasing Frenchman, who was taxed with ingratitude: "*Il faut savoir garder l'indépendance du cœur*," cried he. I own I feel with him. Gratitude without familiarity, gratitude otherwise than as a nameless element in a friendship, is a thing so near to hatred that I do not care to split the difference. Until I find a man who is pleased to receive obligations, I shall continue to question the tact of those who are eager to confer them. What an art it is, to give, even to our nearest friends! and what a test of manners, to receive! How, upon either side, we smuggle away the obligation, blushing for each other; how bluff and dull we make the giver; how hasty, how falsely cheerful, the receiver! And yet an act of such difficulty and distress between near friends, it is supposed we can perform to a total stranger and leave the man transfixed with grateful emotions. The last thing you can do to a man is to burthen him with an obligation, and it is what we propose to begin with! But let us not be deceived: unless he is totally degraded to his trade, anger jars in his inside, and he grates his teeth at our gratuity.

We should wipe two words from our vocabulary: gratitude and charity. In real life, help is given out of friendship, or it is not valued; it is received from the hand of friendship, or it is resented. We are all too proud to take a naked gift: we must seem to pay it, if in nothing else, then with the delights of our society. Here, then, is the pitiful fix of the rich man; here is that needle's eye in which he stuck already in the days of Christ, and still sticks to-day, firmer, if possible, than ever: that he has the money and lacks the love which should make his money acceptable.

Here and now, just as of old in Palestine, he has the rich to dinner, it is with the rich that he takes his pleasure: and when his turn comes to be charitable, he looks in vain for a recipient. His friends are not poor, they do not want; the poor are not his friends, they will not take. To whom is he to give? Where to find—note this phrase—the Deserving Poor? Charity is (what they call) centralised; offices are hired; societies founded, with secretaries paid or unpaid: the hunt of the Deserving Poor goes merrily forward. I think it will take more than a merely human secretary to disinter that character. What! a class that is to be in want from no fault of its own, and yet greedily eager to receive from strangers; and to be quite respectable, and at the same time quite devoid of self-respect; and play the most delicate part of friendship, and yet never be seen; and wear the form of man, and yet fly in the face of all the laws of human nature:—and all this, in the hope of getting a belly-god Burgess through a needle's eye! Oh, let him stick, by all means: and let his polity tumble in the dust; and let his epitaph and all his literature (of which my own works begin to form no inconsiderable part) be abolished even from the history of man! For a fool of this monstrosity of dulness, there can be no salvation: and the fool who looked for the elixir of life was an angel of reason to the fool who looks for the Deserving Poor!

V

And yet there is one course which the unfortunate gentleman may take. He may subscribe to pay the taxes. There were the true charity, impartial and impersonal, cumbering none with obligation, helping all. There were a destination for loveless gifts; there were the way to reach the pocket of the deserving poor, and yet save the time of secretaries! But, alas! there is no colour of romance in such a course; and people nowhere demand the picturesque so much as in their virtues.

V

THE LANTERN-BEARERS

I

These boys congregated every autumn about a certain easterly fisher-village, where they tasted in a high degree the glory of existence. The place was created seemingly on purpose for the diversion of young gentlemen. A street or two of houses, mostly red and many of them tiled ; a number of fine trees clustered about the manse and the kirk-yard, and turning the chief street into a shady alley ; many little gardens more than usually bright with flowers ; nets a-drying, and fisher-wives scolding in the backward parts ; a smell of fish, a genial smell of seaweed ; whiffs of blowing sand at the street-corners ; shops with golf-balls and bottled lollipops ; another shop with penny pickwicks (that remarkable cigar) and the *London Journal*, dear to me for its startling pictures, and a few novels, dear for their suggestive names : such, as well as memory serves me, were the ingredients of the town. These, you are to conceive posted on a spit between two sandy bays, and sparsely flanked with villas—enough for the boys to lodge in with their subsidiary parents, not enough (not yet enough) to cocknify the scene : a haven in the rocks in front : in front of that, a file of grey islets : to the left, endless links and sand wreaths, a wilderness of hiding-holes, alive with popping rabbits and soaring gulls : to the right, a range of seaward crags, one rugged brow beyond another ; the ruins of a mighty and ancient fortress on the brink of one ; coves between—now charmed into sunshine quiet, now whistling with wind and clamorous

with bursting surges; the dens and sheltered hollows redolent of thyme and southernwood, the air at the cliff's edge brisk and clean and pungent of the sea—in front of all, the Bass Rock, tilted seaward like a doubtful bather, the surf ringing it with white, the solan-geese hanging round its summit like a great and glittering smoke. This choice piece of seaboard was sacred, besides, to the wrecker; and the Bass, in the eye of fancy, still flew the colours of King James; and in the ear of fancy the arches of Tantallon still rang with horse-shoe iron, and echoed to the commands of Bell-the-Cat.

There was nothing to mar your days, if you were a boy summering in that part, but the embarrassment of pleasure. You might golf if you wanted; but I seem to have been better employed. You might secrete yourself in the Lady's Walk, a certain sunless dingle of elders, all mossed over by the damp as green as grass, and dotted here and there by the stream-side with roofless walls, the cold homes of anchorites. To fit themselves for life, and with a special eye to acquire the art of smoking, it was even common for the boys to harbour there; and you might have seen a single penny pickwick, honestly shared in lengths with a blunt knife, bestrew the glen with these apprentices. Again, you might join our fishing parties, where we sat perched as thick as solan-geese, a covey of little anglers, boy and girl, angling over each other's heads, to the much entanglement of lines and loss of podleys and consequent shrill recrimination—shrill as the geese themselves. Indeed, had that been all, you might have done this often; but though fishing be a fine pastime, the podley is scarce to be regarded as a dainty for the table; and it was a point of honour that a boy should eat all that he had taken. Or again, you might climb the Law, where the whale's jawbone stood landmark in the buzzing wind, and behold the face of many counties, and the smoke and spires of many towns, and the sails of distant ships. You might bathe, now in the flaws of fine weather, that we pathetically call our

summer, now in a gale of wind, with the sand scourging your bare hide, your clothes thrashing abroad from underneath their guardian stone, the froth of the great breakers casting you headlong ere it had drowned your knees. Or you might explore the tidal rocks, above all in the ebb of springs, when the very roots of the hills were for the nonce discovered ; following my leader from one group to another, groping in slippery tangle for the wreck of ships, wading in pools after the abominable creatures of the sea, and ever with an eye cast backward on the march of the tide and the menaced line of your retreat. And then you might go Crusoeing, a word that covers all extempore eating in the open air : digging perhaps a house under the margin of the links, kindling a fire of the sea-ware, and cooking apples there—if they were truly apples, for I sometimes suppose the merchant must have played us off with some inferior and quite local fruit, capable of resolving, in the neighbourhood of fire, into mere sand and smoke and iodine ; or perhaps pushing to Tantallon, you might lunch on sandwiches and visions in the grassy court, while the wind hummed in the crumbling turrets ; or clambering along the coast, eat geans[1] (the worst, I must suppose, in Christendom) from an adventurous gean tree that had taken root under a cliff, where it was shaken with an ague of east wind, and silvered after gales with salt, and grew so foreign among its bleak surroundings that to eat of its produce was an adventure in itself.

There are mingled some dismal memories with so many that were joyous. Of the fisher-wife, for instance, who had cut her throat at Canty Bay ; and of how I ran with the other children to the top of the Quadrant, and beheld a posse of silent people escorting a cart, and on the cart, bound in a chair, her throat bandaged, and the bandage all bloody—horror !—the fisher-wife herself, who continued thenceforth to hag-ride my thoughts, and even to-day (as I recall the scene) darkens daylight. She was lodged in

[1] Wild cherries.

the little old gaol in the chief street ; but whether or no she died there, with a wise terror of the worst, I never inquired. She had been tippling ; it was but a dingy tragedy ; and it seems strange and hard that, after all these years, the poor crazy sinner should be still pilloried on her cart in the scrap-book of my memory. Nor shall I readily forget a certain house in the Quadrant where a visitor died, and a dark old woman continued to dwell alone with the dead body ; nor how this old woman conceived a hatred to myself and one of my cousins, and in the dread hour of the dusk, as we were clambering on the garden-walls, opened a window in that house of mortality and cursed us in a shrill voice and with a marrowy choice of language. It was a pair of very colourless urchins that fled down the lane from this remarkable experience ! But I recall with a more doubtful sentiment, compounded out of fear and exultation, the coil of equinoctial tempests ; trumpeting squalls, scouring flaws of rain ; the boats with their reefed lugsails scudding for the harbour mouth, where danger lay, for it was hard to make when the wind had any east in it ; the wives clustered with blowing shawls at the pier-head, where (if fate was against them) they might see boat and husband and sons—their whole wealth and their whole family—engulfed under their eyes ; and (what I saw but once) a troop of neighbours forcing such an unfortunate homeward, and she squalling and battling in their midst, a figure scarcely human, a tragic Mænad.

These are things that I recall with interest ; but what my memory dwells upon the most, I have been all this while withholding. It was a sport peculiar to the place, and indeed to a week or so of our two months' holiday there. Maybe it still flourishes in its native spot ; for boys and their pastimes are swayed by periodic forces inscrutable to man ; so that tops and marbles reappear in their due season, regular like the sun and moon ; and the harmless art of knucklebones has seen the fall of the Roman empire and the rise of the United States. It may still flourish in its

native spot, but nowhere else, I am persuaded ; for I tried myself to introduce it on Tweedside, and was defeated lamentably ; its charm being quite local, like a country wine that cannot be exported.

The idle manner of it was this :—

Toward the end of September, when school-time was drawing near and the nights were already black, we would begin to sally from our respective villas, each equipped with a tin bull's-eye lantern. The thing was so well known that it had worn a rut in the commerce of Great Britain ; and the grocers, about the due time, began to garnish their windows with our particular brand of luminary. We wore them buckled to the waist upon a cricket belt, and over them, such was the rigour of the game, a buttoned top-coat. They smelled noisomely of blistered tin ; they never burned aright, though they would always burn our fingers ; their use was naught ; the pleasure of them merely fanciful ; and yet a boy with a bull's-eye under his top-coat asked for nothing more. The fishermen used lanterns about their boats, and it was from them, I suppose, that we had got the hint ; but theirs were not bull's-eyes, nor did we ever play at being fishermen. The police carried them at their belts, and we had plainly copied them in that ; yet we did not pretend to be policemen. Burglars, indeed, we may have had some haunting thoughts of ; and we had certainly an eye to past ages when lanterns were more common, and to certain story-books in which we had found them to figure very largely. But take it for all in all, the pleasure of the thing was substantive ; and to be a boy with a bull's-eye under his top-coat was good enough for us.

When two of these asses met, there would be an anxious "Have you got your lantern ?" and a gratified "Yes !" That was the shibboleth, and very needful too ; for, as it was the rule to keep our glory contained, none could recognise a lantern-bearer, unless (like the polecat) by the smell. Four or five would sometimes climb into the belly of a ten-

man lugger, with nothing but the thwarts above them—for the cabin was usually locked—or choose out some hollow of the links where the wind might whistle overhead. There the coats would be unbuttoned and the bull's-eyes discovered ; and in the chequering glimmer, under the huge windy hall of the night, and cheered by a rich steam of toasting tinware, these fortunate young gentlemen would crouch together in the cold sand of the links or on the scaly bilges of the fishing-boat, and delight themselves with inappropriate talk. Woe is me that I may not give some specimens—some of their foresights of life, or deep inquiries into the rudiments of man and nature, these were so fiery and so innocent, they were so richly silly, so romantically young. But the talk, at any rate, was but a condiment ; and these gatherings themselves only accidents in the career of the lantern-bearer. The essence of this bliss was to walk by yourself in the black night ; the slide shut ; the top-coat buttoned ; not a ray escaping, whether to conduct your footsteps or to make your glory public : a mere pillar of darkness in the dark ; and all the while, deep down in the privacy of your fool's heart, to know you had a bull's-eye at your belt, and to exult and sing over the knowledge.

II

It is said that a poet has died young in the breast of the most stolid. It may be contended, rather, that this (somewhat minor) bard in almost every case survives, and is the spice of life to his possessor. Justice is not done to the versatility and the unplumbed childishness of man's imagination. His life from without may seem but a rude mound of mud ; there will be some golden chamber at the heart of it, in which he dwells delighted ; and for as dark as his pathway seems to the observer, he will have some kind of a bull's-eye at his belt.

It would be hard to pick out a career more cheerless

than that of Dancer, the miser, as he figures in the "Old Bailey Reports," a prey to the most sordid persecutions, the butt of his neighbourhood, betrayed by his hired man, his house beleaguered by the impish school-boy, and he himself grinding and fuming and impotently fleeing to the law against these pin-pricks. You marvel at first that any one should willingly prolong a life so destitute of charm and dignity; and then you call to memory that had he chosen, had he ceased to be a miser, he could have been freed at once from these trials, and might have built himself a castle and gone escorted by a squadron. For the love of more recondite joys, which we cannot estimate, which, it may be, we should envy, the man had willingly forgone both comfort and consideration. "His mind to him a kingdom was"; and sure enough, digging into that mind, which seems at first a dust-heap, we unearth some priceless jewels. For Dancer must have had the love of power and the disdain of using it, a noble character in itself; disdain of many pleasures, a chief part of what is commonly called wisdom; disdain of the inevitable end, that finest trait of mankind; scorn of men's opinions, another element of virtue; and at the back of all, a conscience just like yours and mine, whining like a cur, swindling like a thimble-rigger, but still pointing (there or thereabout) to some conventional standard. Here were a cabinet portrait to which Hawthorne perhaps had done justice; and yet not Hawthorne either, for he was mildly minded, and it lay not in him to create for us that throb of the miser's pulse, his fretful energy of gusto, his vast arms of ambition clutching in he knows not what: insatiable, insane, a god with a muck-rake. Thus, at least, looking in the bosom of the miser, consideration detects the poet in the full tide of life, with more, indeed, of the poetic fire than usually goes to epics; and tracing that mean man about his cold hearth, and to and fro in his discomfortable house, spies within him a blazing bonfire of delight. And so with others, who do not live by bread alone, but by some

cherished and perhaps fantastic pleasure ; who are meat salesmen to the external eye, and possibly to themselves are Shakespeares, Napoleons, or Beethovens ; who have not one virtue to rub against another in the field of active life, and yet perhaps, in the life of contemplation, sit with the saints. We see them on the street, and we can count their buttons ; but heaven knows in what they pride themselves ! heaven knows where they have set their treasure !

There is one fable that touches very near the quick of life : the fable of the monk who passed into the woods, heard a bird break into song, hearkened for a trill or two, and found himself on his return a stranger at his convent gates ; for he had been absent fifty years, and of all his comrades there survived but one to recognise him. It is not only in the woods that this enchanter carols, though perhaps he is native there. He sings in the most doleful places. The miser hears him and chuckles, and the days are moments. With no more apparatus than an ill-smelling lantern I have evoked him on the naked links. All life that is not merely mechanical is spun out of two strands : seeking for that bird and hearing him. And it is just this that makes life so hard to value, and the delight of each so incommunicable ; and just a knowledge of this, and a remembrance of those fortunate hours in which the bird has sung to us, that fills us with such wonder when we turn the pages of the realist. There, to be sure, we find a picture of life in so far as it consists of mud and of old iron, cheap desires and cheap fears, that which we are ashamed to remember and that which we are careless whether we forget ; but of the note of that time-devouring nightingale we hear no news.

The case of these writers of romance is most obscure. They have been boys and youths ; they have lingered outside the window of the beloved, who was then most probably writing to some one else ; they have sat before a sheet of paper, and felt themselves mere continents of congested

poetry, not one line of which would flow ; they have walked alone in the woods, they have walked in cities under the countless lamps ; they have been to sea, they have hated, they have feared, they have longed to knife a man, and maybe done it ; the wild taste of life has stung their palate. Or, if you deny them all the rest, one pleasure at least they have tasted to the full—their books are there to prove it—the keen pleasure of successful literary composition. And yet they fill the globe with volumes, whose cleverness inspires me with despairing admiration, and whose consistent falsity to all I care to call existence, with despairing wrath. If I had no better hope than to continue to revolve among the dreary and petty businesses, and to be moved by the paltry hopes and fears with which they surround and animate their heroes, I declare I would die now. But there has never an hour of mine gone quite so dully yet ; if it were spent waiting at a railway junction, I would have some scattering thoughts, I could count some grains of memory, compared to which the whole of one of these romances seems but dross.

These writers would retort (if I take them properly) that this was very true ; that it was the same with themselves and other persons of (what they call) the artistic temperament ; that in this we were exceptional, and should apparently be ashamed of ourselves ; but that our works must deal exclusively with (what they call) the average man, who was a prodigious dull fellow, and quite dead to all but the paltriest considerations. I accept the issue. We can only know others by ourselves. The artistic temperament (a plague on the expression !) does not make us different from our fellow-men, or it would make us incapable of writing novels ; and the average man (a murrain on the word !) is just like you and me, or he would not be average. It was Whitman who stamped a kind of Birmingham sacredness upon the latter phrase ; but Whitman knew very well, and showed very nobly, that the average man was full of joys and full of poetry of his own. And this harping on

life's dulness and man's meanness is a loud profession of incompetence ; it is one of two things : the cry of the blind eye, *I cannot see*, or the complaint of the dumb tongue, *I cannot utter*. To draw a life without delights is to prove I have not realised it. To picture a man without some sort of poetry—well, it goes near to prove my case, for it shows an author may have little enough. To see Dancer only as a dirty, old, small-minded, impotently fuming man, in a dirty house, besieged by Harrow boys, and probably beset by small attorneys, is to show myself as keen an observer as . . . the Harrow boys. But these young gentlemen (with a more becoming modesty) were content to pluck Dancer by the coat-tails ; they did not suppose they had surprised his secret or could put him living in a book : and it is there my error would have lain. Or say that in the same romance—I continue to call these books romances, in the hope of giving pain—say that in the same romance, which now begins really to take shape, I should leave to speak of Dancer, and follow instead the Harrow boys ; and say that I came on some such business as that of my lantern-bearers on the links ; and described the boys as very cold, spat upon by flurries of rain, and drearily surrounded, all of which they were ; and their talk as silly and indecent, which it certainly was. I might upon these lines, and had I Zola's genius, turn out, in a page or so, a gem of literary art, render the lantern-light with the touches of a master, and lay on the indecency with the ungrudging hand of love ; and when all was done, what a triumph would my picture be of shallowness and dulness ! how it would have missed the point ! how it would have belied the boys ! To the ear of the stenographer, the talk is merely silly and indecent ; but ask the boys themselves, and they are discussing (as it is highly proper they should) the possibilities of existence. To the eye of the observer they are wet and cold and drearily surrounded ; but ask themselves, and they are in the heaven of a recondite pleasure, the ground of which is an ill-smelling lantern.

III

For, to repeat, the ground of a man's joy is often hard to hit. It may hinge at times upon a mere accessory, like the lantern ; it may reside, like Dancer's, in the mysterious inwards of psychology. It may consist with perpetual failure, and find exercise in the continued chase. It has so little bond with externals (such as the observer scribbles in his note-book) that it may even touch them not ; and the man's true life, for which he consents to live, lie altogether in the field of fancy. The clergyman, in his spare hours, may be winning battles, the farmer sailing ships, the banker reaping triumph in the arts : all leading another life, plying another trade from that they chose ; like the poet's housebuilder, who, after all, is cased in stone,

> " By his fireside, as impotent fancy prompts,
> Rebuilds it to his liking."

In such a case the poetry runs underground. The observer (poor soul, with his documents !) is all abroad. For to look at the man is but to court deception. We shall see the trunk from which he draws his nourishment ; but he himself is above and abroad in the green dome of foliage, hummed through by winds and nested in by nightingales. And the true realism were that of the poets, to climb up after him like a squirrel, and catch some glimpse of the heaven for which he lives. And the true realism, always and everywhere, is that of the poets : to find out where joy resides, and give it a voice far beyond singing.

For to miss the joy is to miss all. In the joy of the actors lies the sense of any action. That is the explanation, that the excuse. To one who has not the secret of the lanterns, the scene upon the links is meaningless. And hence the haunting and truly spectral unreality of realistic books. Hence, when we read the English realists, the incredulous wonder with which we observe the hero's constancy under the submerging tide of dulness, and how

he bears up with his jibbing sweetheart, and endures the chatter of idiot girls, and stands by his whole unfeatured wilderness of an existence, instead of seeking relief in drink or foreign travel. Hence in the French, in that meat-market of middle-aged sensuality, the disgusted surprise with which we see the hero drift sidelong, and practically quite untempted, into every description of misconduct and dishonour. In each, we miss the personal poetry, the enchanted atmosphere, that rainbow work of fancy that clothes what is naked and seems to ennoble what is base; in each, life falls dead like dough, instead of soaring away like a balloon into the colours of the sunset; each is true, each inconceivable; for no man lives in external truth, among salts and acids, but in the warm, phantasmagoric chamber of his brain, with the painted windows and the storied walls.

Of this falsity we have had a recent example from a man who knows far better—Tolstoi's "Powers of Darkness." Here is a piece full of force and truth, yet quite untrue. For before Mikita was led into so dire a situation he was tempted, and temptations are beautiful at least in part; and a work which dwells on the ugliness of crime and gives no hint of any loveliness in the temptation, sins against the modesty of life, and, even when Tolstoi writes it, sinks to melodrama. The peasants are not understood; they saw their life in fairer colours; even the deaf girl was clothed in poetry for Mikita, or he had never fallen. And so, once again, even an Old Bailey melodrama, without some brightness of poetry and lustre of existence, falls into the inconceivable and ranks with fairy tales.

IV

In nobler books we are moved with something like the emotions of life; and this emotion is very variously provoked. We are so moved when Levine labours on the field,

when André sinks beyond emotion, when Richard Feverel and Lucy Desborough meet beside the river, when Antony, " not cowardly, puts off his helmet," when Kent has infinite pity on the dying Lear, when, in Dostoieffsky's " Despised and Rejected," the uncomplaining hero drains his cup of suffering and virtue. These are notes that please the great heart of man. Not only love, and the fields, and the bright face of danger, but sacrifice and death and unmerited suffering humbly supported, touch in us the vein of the poetic. We love to think of them, we long to try them, we are humbly hopeful that we may prove heroes also.

We have heard, perhaps, too much of lesser matters. Here is the door, here is the open air.

Itur in antiquam silvam.

LATER ESSAYS

LATER ESSAYS

I

FONTAINEBLEAU

VILLAGE COMMUNITIES OF PAINTERS

I

The charm of Fontainebleau is a thing apart. It is a place that people love even more than they admire. The vigorous forest air, the silence, the majestic avenues of highway, the wilderness of tumbled boulders, the great age and dignity of certain groves—these are but ingredients, they are not the secret of the philtre. The place is sanative; the air, the light, the perfumes, and the shapes of things concord in happy harmony. The artist may be idle and not fear the "blues." He may dally with his life. Mirth, lyric mirth, and a vivacious classical contentment are of the very essence of the better kind of art; and these, in that most smiling forest, he has the chance to learn or to remember. Even on the plain of Bière, where the Angelus of Millet still tolls upon the ear of fancy, a larger air, a higher heaven, something ancient and healthy in the face of nature, purify the mind alike from dulness and hysteria. There is no place where the young are more gladly conscious of their youth, or the old better contented with their age.

The fact of its great and special beauty further recommends this country to the artist. The field was chosen by men in whose blood there still raced some of the gleeful or solemn exultation of great art—Millet who loved dignity

like Michelangelo, Rousseau whose modern brush was dipped in the glamour of the ancients. It was chosen before the day of that strange turn in the history of art, of which we now perceive the culmination in impressionistic tales and pictures—that voluntary aversion of the eye from all speciously strong and beautiful effects—that disinterested love of dulness which has set so many Peter Bells to paint the river-side primrose. It was then chosen for its proximity to Paris. And for the same cause, and by the force of tradition, the painter of to-day continues to inhabit and to paint it. There is in France scenery incomparable for romance and harmony. Provence, and the valley of the Rhone from Vienne to Tarascon, are one succession of masterpieces waiting for the brush. The beauty is not merely beauty ; it tells, besides, a tale to the imagination, and surprises while it charms. Here you shall see castellated towns that would befit the scenery of dreamland ; streets that glow with colour like cathedral windows ; hills of the most exquisite proportions ; flowers of every precious colour, growing thick like grass. All these, by the grace of railway travel, are brought to the very door of the modern painter ; yet he does not seek them ; he remains faithful to Fontainebleau, to the eternal bridge of Grez, to the watering-pot cascade in Cernay valley. Even Fontainebleau was chosen for him ; even in Fontainebleau he shrinks from what is sharply charactered. But one thing, at least, is certain : whatever he may choose to paint and in whatever manner, it is good for the artist to dwell among graceful shapes. Fontainebleau, if it be but quiet scenery, is classically graceful ; and though the student may look for different qualities, this quality, silently present, will educate his hand and eye.

But, before all its other advantages—charm, loveliness, or proximity to Paris—comes the great fact that it is already colonised. The institution of a painters' colony is a work of time and tact. The population must be conquered. The innkeeper has to be taught, and he soon learns, the lesson

of unlimited credit ; he must be taught to welcome as a favoured guest a young gentleman in a very greasy coat, and with little baggage beyond a box of colours and a canvas ; and he must learn to preserve his faith in customers who will eat heartily and drink of the best, borrow money to buy tobacco, and perhaps not pay a stiver for a year. A colour merchant has next to be attracted. A certain vogue must be given to the place, lest the painter, most gregarious of animals, should find himself alone. And no sooner are these first difficulties overcome than fresh perils spring up upon the other side ; and the bourgeois and the tourist are knocking at the gate. This is the crucial moment for the colony. If these intruders gain a footing, they not only banish freedom and amenity ; pretty soon, by means of their long purses, they will have undone the education of the innkeeper ; prices will rise and credit shorten ; and the poor painter must fare farther on and find another hamlet. " Not here, O Apollo ! " will become his song. Thus Trouville and, the other day, St. Raphael were lost to the arts. Curious and not always edifying are the shifts that the French student uses to defend his lair ; like the cuttlefish, he must sometimes blacken the waters of his chosen pool ; but at such a time and for so practical a purpose Mrs. Grundy must allow him licence. Where his own purse and credit are not threatened, he will do the honours of his village generously. Any artist is made welcome, through whatever medium he may seek expression ; science is respected ; even the idler, if he prove, as he so rarely does, a gentleman, will soon begin to find himself at home. And when that essentially modern creature, the English or American girl-student, began to walk calmly into his favourite inns as if into a drawing-room at home, the French painter owned himself defenceless ; he submitted or he fled. His French respectability, quite as precise as ours, though covering different provinces of life, recoiled aghast before the innovation. But the girls were painters ; there was nothing to be done ; and Barbizon,

when I last saw it and for the time at least, was practically ceded to the fair invader. Paterfamilias, on the other hand, the common tourist, the holiday shopman, and the cheap young gentleman upon the spree, he hounded from his villages with every circumstance of contumely.

This purely artistic society is excellent for the young artist. The lads are mostly fools; they hold the latest orthodoxy in its crudeness; they are at that stage of education, for the most part, when a man is too much occupied with style to be aware of the necessity for any matter; and this, above all for the Englishman, is excellent. To work grossly at the trade, to forget sentiment, to think of his material and nothing else, is, for a while at least, the king's highway of progress. Here, in England, too many painters and writers dwell dispersed, unshielded, among the intelligent bourgeois. These, when they are not merely indifferent, prate to him about the lofty aims and moral influence of art. And this is the lad's ruin. For art is, first of all and last of all, a trade. The love of words and not a desire to publish new discoveries, the love of form and not a novel reading of historical events, mark the vocation of the writer and the painter. The arabesque, properly speaking, and even in literature, is the first fancy of the artist; he first plays with his material as a child plays with a kaleidoscope; and he is already in a second stage when he begins to use his pretty counters for the end of representation. In that, he must pause long and toil faithfully; that is his apprenticeship; and it is only the few who will really grow beyond it, and go forward, fully equipped, to do the business of real art—to give life to abstractions and significance and charm to facts. In the meanwhile, let him dwell much among his fellow-craftsmen. They alone can take a serious interest in the childish tasks and pitiful successes of these years. They alone can behold with equanimity this fingering of the dumb keyboard, this polishing of empty sentences, this dull and literal painting of dull and insignificant subjects. Outsiders will spur him on.

They will say, " Why do you not write a great book ? paint a great picture ? " If his guardian angel fail him, they may even persuade him to the attempt, and, ten to one, his hand is coarsened and his style falsified for life.

And this brings me to a warning. The life of the apprentice to any art is both unstrained and pleasing ; it is strewn with small successes in the midst of a career of failure, patiently supported ; the heaviest scholar is conscious of a certain progress ; and if he come not appreciably nearer to the art of Shakespeare, grows letter-perfect in the domain of A-B, ab. But the time comes when a man should cease prelusory gymnastic, stand up, put a violence upon his will, and, for better or worse, begin the business of creation. This evil day there is a tendency continually to postpone : above all with painters. They have made so many studies that it has become a habit ; they make more, the walls of exhibitions blush with them ; and death finds these aged students still busy with their horn-book. This class of man finds a congenial home in artist villages ; in the slang of the English colony at Barbizon we used to call them " Snoozers." Continual returns to the city, the society of men further advanced, the study of great works, a sense of humour or, if such a thing is to be had, a little religion or philosophy, are the means of treatment. It will be time enough to think of curing the malady after it has been caught ; for to catch it is the very thing for which you seek that dream-land of the painters' village. " Snoozing " is a part of the artistic education ; and the rudiments must be learned stupidly, all else being forgotten, as if they were an object in themselves.

Lastly, there is something, or there seems to be something, in the very air of France that communicates the love of style. Precision, clarity, the cleanly and crafty employment of material, a grace in the handling, apart from any value in the thought, seem to be acquired by the mere residence ; or, if not acquired, become at least the more appreciated. The air of Paris is alive with this technical

inspiration. And to leave that airy city and awake next day upon the borders of the forest is but to change externals. The same spirit of dexterity and finish breathes from the long alleys and the lofty groves, from the wildernesses that are still pretty in their confusion, and the great plain that contrives to be decorative in its emptiness.

II

In spite of its really considerable extent, the forest of Fontainebleau is hardly anywhere tedious. I know the whole western side of it with what, I suppose, I may call thoroughness; well enough at least to testify that there is no square mile without some special character and charm. Such quarters, for instance, as the Long Rocher, the Bas-Bréau, and the Reine Blanche might be a hundred miles apart; they have scarce a point in common beyond the silence of the birds. The two last are really conterminous; and in both are tall and ancient trees that have outlived a thousand political vicissitudes. But in the one the great oaks prosper placidly upon an even floor; they beshadow a great field; and the air and the light are very free below their stretching boughs. In the other the trees find difficult footing; castles of white rock lie tumbled one upon another, the foot slips, the crooked viper slumbers, the moss clings in the crevice; and above it all the great beech goes spiring and casting forth her arms, and, with a grace beyond church architecture, canopies this rugged chaos. Meanwhile, dividing the two cantons, the broad white causeway of the Paris road runs in an avenue; a road conceived for pageantry and for triumphal marches, an avenue for an army; but, its days of glory over, it now lies grilling in the sun between cool groves, and only at intervals the vehicle of the cruising tourist is seen far away and faintly audible along its ample sweep. A little upon one side, and you find a district of sand and birch and

boulder ; a little upon the other lies the valley of Apremont, all juniper and heather ; and close beyond that you may walk into a zone of pine trees. So artfully are the ingredients mingled. Nor must it be forgotten that, in all this part, you come continually forth upon a hill-top, and behold the plain, northward and westward, like an unrefulgent sea ; nor that all day long the shadows keep changing ; and at last, to the red fires of sunset, night succeeds, and with the night a new forest, full of whisper, gloom, and fragrance. There are few things more renovating than to leave Paris, the lamplit arches of the Carrousel, and the long alignment of the glittering streets, and to bathe the senses in this fragrant darkness of the wood.

In this continual variety the mind is kept vividly alive. It is a changeful place to paint, a stirring place to live in. As fast as your foot carries you, you pass from scene to scene, each vigorously painted in the colours of the sun, each endeared by that hereditary spell of forests on the mind of man, who still remembers and salutes the ancient refuge of his race.

And yet the forest has been civilised throughout. The most savage corners bear a name, and have been cherished like antiquities ; in the most remote, Nature has prepared and balanced her effects as if with conscious art ; and man, with his guiding arrows of blue paint, has countersigned the picture. After your farthest wandering, you are never surprised to come forth upon the vast avenue of highway, to strike the centre point of branching alleys, or to find the aqueduct trailing, thousand-footed, through the brush. It is not a wilderness ; it is rather a preserve. And, fitly enough, the centre of the maze is not a hermit's cavern. In the midst, a little mirthful town lies sunlit, humming with the business of pleasure ; and the palace, breathing distinction and peopled by historic names, stands smokeless among gardens.

Perhaps the last attempt at savage life was that of the harmless humbug who called himself the hermit. In a great

tree, close by the highroad, he had built himself a little cabin after the manner of the Swiss Family Robinson; thither he mounted at night, by the romantic aid of a rope ladder; and if dirt be any proof of sincerity, the man was savage as a Sioux. I had the pleasure of his acquaintance; he appeared grossly stupid, not in his perfect wits, and interested in nothing but small change; for that he had a great avidity. In the course of time he proved to be a chicken-stealer, and vanished from his perch; and perhaps from the first he was no true votary of forest freedom, but an ingenious, theatrically-minded beggar, and his cabin in the tree was only stock-in-trade to beg withal. The choice of his position would seem to indicate so much; for if in the forest there are no places still to be discovered, there are many that have been forgotten, and that lie unvisited. There, to be sure, are the blue arrows waiting to reconduct you, now blazed upon a tree, now posted in the corner of a rock. But your security from interruption is complete; you might camp for weeks, if there were only water, and not a soul suspect your presence; and if I may suppose the reader to have committed some great crime and come to me for aid, I think I could still find my way to a small cavern, fitted with a hearth and chimney, where he might lie perfectly concealed. A confederate landscape-painter might daily supply him with food; for water, he would have to make a nightly tramp as far as to the nearest pond; and at last, when the hue and cry began to blow over, he might get gently on the train at some side station, work round by a series of junctions, and be quietly captured at the frontier.

Thus Fontainebleau, although it is truly but a pleasure-ground, and although, in favourable weather, and in the more celebrated quarters, it literally buzzes with the tourist, yet has some of the immunities and offers some of the repose of natural forests. And the solitary, although he must return at night to his frequented inn, may yet pass the day with his own thoughts in the companionable silence

of the trees. The demands of the imagination vary; some can be alone in a back garden looked upon by windows; others, like the ostrich, are content with a solitude that meets the eye; and others, again, expand in fancy to the very borders of their desert, and are irritably conscious of a hunter's camp in an adjacent county. To these last, of course, Fontainebleau will seem but an extended tea-garden: a Rosherville on a by-day. But to the plain man it offers solitude: an excellent thing in itself, and a good whet for company.

III

I was for some time a consistent Barbizonian; *et ego in Arcadia vixi;* it was a pleasant season; and that noiseless hamlet lying close among the borders of the wood is for me, as for so many others, a green spot in memory. The great Millet was just dead, the green shutters of his modest house were closed; his daughters were in mourning. The date of my first visit was thus an epoch in the history of art: in a lesser way, it was an epoch in the history of the Latin Quarter. The *Petit Cénacle* was dead and buried; Murger and his crew of sponging vagabonds were all at rest from their expedients; the tradition of their real life was nearly lost; and the petrified legend of the *Vie de Bohême* had become a sort of gospel, and still gave the cue to zealous imitators. But if the book be written in rose-water, the imitation was still further expurgated; honesty was the rule; the innkeepers gave, as I have said, almost unlimited credit; they suffered the seediest painter to depart, to take all his belongings, and to leave his bill unpaid; and if they sometimes lost, it was by English and Americans alone. At the same time, the great influx of Anglo-Saxons had begun to affect the life of the studious. There had been disputes; and, in one instance at least, the English and the Americans had made common cause to prevent a cruel pleasantry. It would be well if nations and races

could communicate their qualities; but in practice when they look upon each other, they have an eye to nothing but defects. The Anglo-Saxon is essentially dishonest; the French is devoid by nature of the principle that we call "Fair Play." The Frenchman marvelled at the scruples of his guest, and, when that defender of innocence retired overseas and left his bills unpaid, he marvelled once again; the good and evil were, in his eyes, part and parcel of the same eccentricity; a shrug expressed his judgment upon both.

At Barbizon there was no master, no pontiff in the arts. Palizzi bore rule at Grez—urbane, superior rule—his memory rich in anecdotes of the great men of yore, his mind fertile in theories; sceptical, composed, and venerable to the eye; and yet beneath these outworks, all twittering with Italian superstition, his eye scouting for omens, and the whole fabric of his manners giving way on the appearance of a hunchback. Cernay had Pelouse, the admirable, placid Pelouse, smilingly critical of youth, who, when a full-blown commercial traveller suddenly threw down his samples, bought a colour-box, and became the master whom we have all admired. Marlotte, for a central figure, boasted Olivier de Penne. Only Barbizon, since the death of Millet, was a headless commonwealth. Even its secondary lights, and those who in my day made the stranger welcome, have since deserted it. The good Lachèvre has departed, carrying his household gods; and long before that Gaston Lafenestre was taken from our midst by an untimely death. He died before he had deserved success; it may be, he would never have deserved it; but his kind, comely, modest countenance still haunts the memory of all who knew him. Another—whom I will not name—has moved farther on, pursuing the strange Odyssey of his decadence. His days of royal favour had departed even then; but he still retained, in his narrower life at Barbizon, a certain stamp of conscious importance, hearty, friendly, filling the room, the occupant of several chairs; nor had he yet ceased his

losing battle, still labouring upon great canvases that none would buy, still waiting the return of fortune. But these days also were too good to last ; and the former favourite of two sovereigns fled, if I heard the truth, by night. There was a time when he was counted a great man, and Millet but a dauber ; behold, how the whirligig of time brings in his revenges ! To pity Millet is a piece of arrogance ; if life be hard for such resolute and pious spirits, it is harder still for us, had we the wit to understand it ; but we may pity his unhappier rival, who, for no apparent merit, was raised to opulence and momentary fame, and, through no apparent fault, was suffered step by step to sink again to nothing. No misfortune can exceed the bitterness of such back-foremost progress, even bravely supported as it was ; but to those also who were taken early from the easel, a regret is due. From all the young men of this period, one stood out by the vigour of his promise ; he was in the age of fermentation, enamoured of eccentricities. *"Il faut faire de la peinture nouvelle,"* was his watchword ; but if time and experience had continued his education, if he had been granted health to return from these excursions to the steady and the central, I must believe that the name of Hills had become famous.

Siron's inn, that excellent artists' barrack, was managed upon easy principles. At any hour of the night, when you returned from wandering in the forest, you went to the billiard-room and helped yourself to liquors, or descended to the cellar and returned laden with beer or wine. The Sirons were all locked in slumber ; there was none to check your inroads ; only at the week's end a computation was made, the gross sum was divided, and a varying share set down to every lodger's name under the rubric : *estrats.* Upon the more long-suffering the larger tax was levied ; and your bill lengthened in a direct proportion to the easiness of your disposition. At any hour of the morning, again, you could get your coffee or cold milk, and set forth into the forest. The doves had perhaps wakened you,

fluttering into your chamber ; and on the threshold of the inn you were met by the aroma of the forest. Close by were the great aisles, the mossy boulders, the interminable field of forest shadow. There you were free to dream and wander. And at noon, and again at six o'clock, a good meal awaited you on Siron's table. The whole of your accommodation, set aside that varying item of the *estrats*, cost you five francs a day ; your bill was never offered you until you asked it ; and if you were out of luck's way, you might depart for where you pleased and leave it pending.

IV

Theoretically, the house was open to all comers ; practically, it was a kind of club. The guests protected themselves, and, in so doing, they protected Siron. Formal manners being laid aside, essential courtesy was the more rigidly exacted ; the new arrival had to feel the pulse of the society ; and a breach of its undefined observances was promptly punished. A man might be as plain, as dull, as slovenly, as free of speech as he desired ; but to a touch of presumption or a word of hectoring these free Barbizonians were as sensitive as a tea-party of maiden ladies. I have seen people driven forth from Barbizon ; it would be difficult to say in words what they had done, but they deserved their fate. They had shown themselves unworthy to enjoy these corporate freedoms ; they had pushed themselves ; they had " made their head " ; they wanted tact to appreciate the " fine shades " of Barbizonian etiquette. And, once they were condemned, the process of extrusion was ruthless in its cruelty ; after one evening with the formidable Bodmer, the Bailly of our commonwealth, the erring stranger was beheld no more ; he rose exceeding early the next day, and the first coach conveyed him from the scene of his discomfiture. These sentences of banishment were never, in my knowledge, delivered against an

artist ; such would, I believe, have been illegal ; but the odd and pleasant fact is this, that they were never needed. Painters, sculptors, writers, singers, I have seen all of these in Barbizon ; and some were sulky, and some blatant and inane ; but one and all entered at once into the spirit of the association. This singular society is purely French, a creature of French virtues, and possibly of French defects. It cannot be imitated by the English. The roughness, the impatience, the more obvious selfishness, and even the more ardent friendships of the Anglo-Saxon, speedily dismember such a commonwealth. But this random gathering of young French painters, with neither apparatus nor parade of government, yet kept the life of the place upon a certain footing, insensibly imposed their etiquette upon the docile, and by caustic speech enforced their edicts against the unwelcome. To think of it is to wonder the more at the strange failure of their race upon the larger theatre. This inbred civility—to use the word in its completest meaning —this natural and facile adjustment of contending liberties, seems all that is required to make a governable nation and a just and prosperous country.

Our society, thus purged and guarded, was full of high spirits, of laughter, and of the initiative of youth. The few elder men who joined us were still young at heart, and took the key from their companions. We returned from long stations in the fortifying air, our blood renewed by the sunshine, our spirits refreshed by the silence of the forest ; the Babel of loud voices sounded good ; we fell to eat and play like the natural man ; and in the high inn chamber, panelled with indifferent pictures and lit by candles guttering in the night air, the talk and laughter sounded far into the night. It was a good place and a good life for any naturally-minded youth ; better yet for the student of painting, and perhaps best of all for the student of letters. He, too, was saturated in this atmosphere of style ; he was shut out from the disturbing currents of the world, he might forget that there existed other and more pressing interests than

that of art. But, in such a place, it was hardly possible to write ; he could not drug his conscience, like the painter, by the production of listless studies ; he saw himself idle among many who were apparently, and some who were really, employed ; and what with the impulse of increasing health and the continual provocation of romantic scenes, he became tormented with the desire to work. He enjoyed a strenuous idleness, full of visions, hearty meals, long, sweltering walks, mirth among companions ; and, still floating like music through his brain, foresights of great works that Shakespeare might be proud to have conceived, headless epics, glorious torsos of dramas, and words that were alive with import. So in youth, like Moses from the mountain, we have sights of that House Beautiful of art which we shall never enter. They are dreams and unsubstantial ; visions of style that repose upon no base of human meaning ; the last heart-throbs of that excited amateur who has to die in all of us before the artist can be born. But they come to us in such a rainbow of glory that all subsequent achievement appears dull and earthly in comparison. We were all artists ; almost all in the age of illusion, cultivating an imaginary genius, and walking to the strains of some deceiving Ariel ; small wonder, indeed, if we were happy ! But art, of whatever nature, is a kind mistress ; and though these dreams of youth fall by their own baselessness, others succeed, graver and more substantial ; the symptoms change, the amiable malady endures ; and still, at an equal distance, the House Beautiful shines upon its hill-top.

V

Grez lies out of the forest, down by the bright river. It boasts a mill, an ancient church, a castle, and a bridge of many sterlings. And the bridge is a piece of public property ; anonymously famous ; beaming on the incurious

dilettante from the walls of a hundred exhibitions. I have seen it in the Salon; I have seen it in the Academy; I have seen it in the last French Exposition, excellently done by Bloomer; in a black-and-white by Mr. A. Henley, it once adorned this essay in the pages of the *Magazine of Art*. Long-suffering bridge! And if you visit Grez to-morrow, you shall find another generation, camped at the bottom of Chevillon's garden under their white umbrellas, and doggedly painting it again.

The bridge taken for granted, Grez is a less inspiring place than Barbizon. I give it the palm over Cernay. There is something ghastly in the great empty village square of Cernay, with the inn tables standing in one corner, as though the stage were set for rustic opera, and in the early morning all the painters breaking their fast upon white wine under the windows of the villagers. It is vastly different to awake in Grez, to go down the green inn-garden, to find the river streaming through the bridge, and to see the dawn begin across the poplared level. The meals are laid in the cool arbour, under fluttering leaves. The splash of oars and bathers, the bathing costumes out to dry, the trim canoes beside the jetty, tell of a society that has an eye to pleasure. There is "something to do" at Grez. Perhaps, for that very reason, I can recall no such enduring ardours, no such glories of exhilaration, as among the solemn groves and uneventful hours of Barbizon. This "something to do" is a great enemy to joy; it is a way out of it; you wreak your high spirits on some cut-and-dry employment, and behold them gone! But Grez is a merry place after its kind: pretty to see, merry to inhabit. The course of its pellucid river, whether up or down, is full of gentle attractions for the navigator: islanded reed-mazes where, in autumn, the red berries cluster; the mirrored and inverted images of trees; lilies, and mills, and the foam and thunder of weirs. And of all noble sweeps of roadway, none is nobler, on a windy dusk, than the high-road to Nemours between its lines of talking poplar.

But even Grez is changed. The old inn, long shored and trussed and buttressed, fell at length under the mere weight of years, and the place as it was is but a fading image in the memory of former guests. They, indeed, recall the ancient wooden stair; they recall the rainy evening, the wide hearth, the blaze of the twig fire, and the company that gathered round the pillar in the kitchen. But the material fabric is now dust; soon, with the last of its inhabitants, its very memory shall follow; and they, in their turn, shall suffer the same law, and, both in name and lineament, vanish from the world of men. "For remembrance of the old house' sake," as Pepys once quaintly put it, let me tell one story. When the tide of invasion swept over France, two foreign painters were left stranded and penniless in Grez; and there, until the war was over, the Chevillons ungrudgingly harboured them. It was difficult to obtain supplies; but the two waifs were still welcome to the best, sat down daily with the family to table, and at the due intervals were supplied with clean napkins, which they scrupled to employ. Madame Chevillon observed the fact and reprimanded them. But they stood firm; eat they must, but having no money they would soil no napkins.

VI

Nemours and Moret, for all they are so picturesque, have been little visited by painters. They are, indeed, too populous; they have manners of their own, and might resist the drastic process of colonisation. Montigny has been somewhat strangely neglected; I never knew it inhabited but once, when Will H. Low installed himself there with a barrel of *piquette*, and entertained his friends in a leafy trellis above the weir, in sight of the green country and to the music of the falling water. It was a most airy, quaint, and pleasant place of residence, just too rustic to be stagey; and from my memories of the place in general,

and that garden trellis in particular—at morning, visited by birds, or at night, when the dew fell and the stars were of the party—I am inclined to think perhaps too favourably of the future of Montigny. Chailly-en-Bière has outlived all things, and lies dustily slumbering in the plain—the cemetery of itself. The great road remains to testify of its former bustle of postilions and carriage bells ; and, like memorial tablets, there still hang in the inn room the paintings of a former generation, dead or decorated long ago. In my time, one man only, greatly daring, dwelt there. From time to time he would walk over to Barbizon, like a shade revisiting the glimpses of the moon, and after some communication with flesh and blood return to his austere hermitage. But even he, when I last revisited the forest, had come to Barbizon for good, and closed the roll of the Chaillyites. It may revive—but I much doubt it. Achères and Recloses still wait a pioneer ; Bourron is out of the question, being merely Grez over again, without the river, the bridge, or the beauty ; and of all the possible places on the western side, Marlotte alone remains to be discussed. I scarcely know Marlotte, and, very likely for that reason, am not much in love with it. It seems a glaring and unsightly hamlet. The inn of Mother Antonie is unattractive ; and its more reputable rival, though comfortable enough, is commonplace. Marlotte has a name ; it is famous ; if I were the young painter I would leave it alone in its glory.

VII

These are the words of an old stager ; and though time is a good conservative in forest places, much may be untrue to-day. Many of us have passed Arcadian days there and moved on, but yet left a portion of our souls behind us buried in the woods. I would not dig for these reliquiæ ; they are incommunicable treasures that will not enrich the finder ; and yet there may lie, interred below great oaks

or scattered along forest paths, stores of youth's dynamite and dear remembrances. And as one generation passes on and renovates the field of tillage for the next, I entertain a fancy that when the young men of to-day go forth into the forest they shall find the air still vitalised by the spirits of their predecessors, and, like those "unheard melodies" that are the sweetest of all, the memory of our laughter shall still haunt the field of trees. Those merry voices that in woods call the wanderer farther, those thrilling silences and whispers of the groves, surely in Fontainebleau they must be vocal of me and my companions? We are not content to pass away entirely from the scenes of our delight; we would leave, if but in gratitude, a pillar and a legend.

One generation after another fall like honey-bees upon this memorable forest, rifle its sweets, pack themselves with vital memories, and when the theft is consummated depart again into life richer, but poorer also. The forest, indeed, they have possessed, from that day forward it is theirs indissolubly, and they will return to walk in it at night in the fondest of their dreams, and use it for ever in their books and pictures. Yet when they made their packets, and put up their notes and sketches, something, it should seem, had been forgotten. A projection of themselves shall appear to haunt unfriended these scenes of happiness, a natural child of fancy, begotten and forgotten unawares. Over the whole field of our wanderings such fetches are still travelling like indefatigable bagmen; but the imps of Fontainebleau, as of all beloved spots, are very long of life, and memory is piously unwilling to forget their orphanage. If anywhere about that wood you meet my airy bantling, greet him with tenderness. He was a pleasant lad, though now abandoned. And when it comes to your own turn to quit the forest, may you leave behind you such another; no Antony or Werther, let us hope, no tearful whipster, but, as becomes this not uncheerful and most active age in which we figure, the child of happy hours.

No art, it may be said, was ever perfect, and not many

noble, that has not been mirthfully conceived. And no man, it may be added, was ever anything but a wet blanket and a cross to his companions who boasted not a copious spirit of enjoyment. Whether as man or artist, let the youth make haste to Fontainebleau, and once there let him address himself to the spirit of the place ; he will learn more from exercise than from studies, although both are necessary; and if he can get into his heart the gaiety and inspiration of the woods he will have gone far to undo the evil of his sketches. A spirit once well strung up to the concert-pitch of the primeval out-of-doors will hardly dare to finish a study and magniloquently ticket it a picture. The incommunicable thrill of things, that is the tuning-fork by which we test the flatness of our art. Here it is that Nature teaches and condemns, and still spurs up to further effort and new failure. Thus it is that she sets us blushing at our ignorant and tepid works ; and the more we find of these inspiring shocks the less shall we be apt to love the literal in our productions. In all sciences and senses the letter kills ; and to-day, when cackling human geese express their ignorant condemnation of all studio pictures, it is a lesson most useful to be learnt. Let the young painter go to Fontainebleau, and while he stupefies himself with studies that teach him the mechanical side of his trade, let him walk in the great air, and be a servant of mirth, and not pick and botanise, but wait upon the moods of Nature. So he will learn—or learn not to forget—the poetry of life and earth, which, when he has acquired his track, will save him from joyless reproduction.

II

A NOTE ON REALISM

Style is the invariable mark of any master; and for the student who does not aspire so high as to be numbered with the giants, it is still the one quality in which he may improve himself at will. Passion, wisdom, creative force, the power of mystery or colour, are allotted in the hour of birth, and can be neither learned nor simulated. But the just and dexterous use of what qualities we have, the proportion of one part to another and to the whole, the elision of the useless, the accentuation of the important, and the preservation of a uniform character from end to end—these, which taken together constitute technical perfection, are to some degree within the reach of industry and intellectual courage. What to put in and what to leave out; whether some particular fact be organically necessary or purely ornamental; whether, if it be purely ornamental, it may not weaken or obscure the general design; and finally, whether, if we decide to use it, we should do so grossly and notably, or in some conventional disguise: are questions of plastic style continually re-arising. And the sphinx that patrols the highways of executive art has no more unanswerable riddle to propound.

In literature (from which I must draw my instances) the great change of the past century has been effected by the admission of detail. It was inaugurated by the romantic Scott; and at length, by the semi-romantic Balzac and his more or less wholly unromantic followers, bound like a duty on the novelist. For some time it signified and expressed a more ample contemplation of the conditions of

man's life ; but it has recently (at least in France) fallen into a merely technical and decorative stage, which it is, perhaps, still too harsh to call survival. With a movement of alarm, the wiser or more timid begin to fall a little back from these extremities ; they begin to aspire after a more naked, narrative articulation ; after the succinct, the dignified, and the poetic ; and as a means to this, after a general lightening of this baggage of detail. After Scott we beheld the starveling story—once, in the hands of Voltaire, as abstract as a parable—begin to be pampered upon facts. The introduction of these details developed a particular ability of hand ; and that ability, childishly indulged, has led to the works that now amaze us on a railway journey. A man of the unquestionable force of M. Zola spends himself on technical successes. To afford a popular flavour and attract the mob, he adds a steady current of what I may be allowed to call the rancid. That is exciting to the moralist ; but what more particularly interests the artist is this tendency of the extreme of detail, when followed as a principle, to degenerate into mere *feux-de-joie* of literary tricking. The other day even M. Daudet was to be heard babbling of audible colours and visible sounds.

This odd suicide of one branch of the realists may serve to remind us of the fact which underlies a very dusty conflict of the critics. All representative art, which can be said to live, is both realistic and ideal ; and the realism about which we quarrel is a matter purely of externals. It is no especial cultus of nature and veracity, but a mere whim of veering fashion, that has made us turn our back upon the larger, more various, and more romantic art of yore. A photographic exactitude in dialogue is now the exclusive fashion ; but even in the ablest hands it tells us no more—I think it even tells us less—than Molière, wielding his artificial medium, has told to us and to all time of Alceste or Orgon, Dorine or Chrysale. The historical novel is forgotten. Yet truth to the conditions of man's nature

and the conditions of man's life, the truth of literary art, is free of the ages. It may be told us in a carpet comedy, in a novel of adventure, or a fairy tale. The scene may be pitched in London, on the sea-coast of Bohemia, or away on the mountains of Beulah. And by an odd and luminous accident, if there is any page of literature calculated to awake the envy of M. Zola, it must be that "Troilus and Cressida" which Shakespeare, in a spasm of unmanly anger with the world, grafted on the heroic story of the siege of Troy.

This question of realism, let it then be clearly understood, regards not in the least degree the fundamental truth, but only the technical method, of a work of art. Be as ideal or as abstract as you please, you will be none the less veracious; but if you be weak, you run the risk of being tedious and inexpressive; and if you be very strong and honest, you may chance upon a masterpiece.

A work of art is first cloudily conceived in the mind; during the period of gestation it stands more clearly forward from these swaddling mists, puts on expressive lineaments, and becomes at length that most faultless, but also, alas! that incommunicable product of the human mind, a perfected design. On the approach to execution all is changed. The artist must now step down, don his working clothes, and become the artisan. He now resolutely commits his airy conception, his delicate Ariel, to the touch of matter; he must decide, almost in a breath, the scale, the style, the spirit, and the particularity of execution of his whole design.

The engendering idea of some works is stylistic; a technical preoccupation stands them instead of some robuster principle of life. And with these the execution is but play; for the stylistic problem is resolved beforehand, and all large originality of treatment wilfully foregone. Such are the verses, intricately designed, which we have learnt to admire, with a certain smiling admiration, at the hands of Mr. Lang and Mr. Dobson; such, too, are those

canvases where dexterity or even breadth of plastic style takes the place of pictorial nobility of design. So, it may be remarked, it was easier to begin to write "Esmond" than "Vanity Fair," since, in the first, the style was dictated by the nature of the plan; and Thackeray, a man probably of some indolence of mind, enjoyed and got good profit of this economy of effort. But the case is exceptional. Usually in all works of art that have been conceived from within outwards, and generously nourished from the author's mind, the moment in which he begins to execute is one of extreme perplexity and strain. Artists of indifferent energy and an imperfect devotion to their own ideal make this ungrateful effort once for all; and, having formed a style, adhere to it through life. But those of a higher order cannot rest content with a process which, as they continue to employ it, must infallibly degenerate towards the academic and the cut-and-dried. Every fresh work in which they embark is the signal for a fresh engagement of the whole forces of their mind; and the changing views which accompany the growth of their experience are marked by still more sweeping alterations in the manner of their art. So that criticism loves to dwell upon and distinguish the varying periods of a Raphael, a Shakespeare, or a Beethoven.

It is, then, first of all, at this initial and decisive moment when execution is begun, and thenceforth only in a less degree, that the ideal and the real do indeed, like good and evil angels, contend for the direction of the work. Marble, paint, and language, the pen, the needle, and the brush, all have their grossnesses, their ineffable impotences, their hours, if I may so express myself, of insubordination. It is the work and it is a great part of the delight of any artist to contend with these unruly tools, and now by brute energy, now by witty expedient, to drive and coax them to effect his will. Given these means, so laughably inadequate, and given the interest, the intensity, and the multiplicity of the actual sensation whose effect he is to render with their aid, the artist has one main and necessary resource which

he must, in every case and upon any theory, employ. He must, that is, suppress much and omit more. He must omit what is tedious or irrelevant, and suppress what is tedious and necessary. But such facts as, in regard to the main design, subserve a variety of purposes, he will perforce and eagerly retain. And it is the mark of the very highest order of creative art to be woven exclusively of such. There, any fact that is registered is contrived a double or a treble debt to pay, and is at once an ornament in its place and a pillar in the main design. Nothing would find room in such a picture that did not serve, at once, to complete the composition, to accentuate the scheme of colour, to distinguish the planes of distance, and to strike the note of the selected sentiment; nothing would be allowed in such a story that did not, at the same time, expedite the progress of the fable, build up the characters, and strike home the moral or the philosophical design. But this is unattainable. As a rule, so far from building the fabric of our works exclusively with these, we are thrown into a rapture if we think we can muster a dozen or a score of them, to be the plums of our confection. And hence, in order that the canvas may be filled or the story proceed from point to point, other details must be admitted. They must be admitted, alas! upon a doubtful title; many without marriage robes. Thus any work of art, as it proceeds towards completion, too often—I had almost written always—loses in force and poignancy of main design. Our little air is swamped and dwarfed among hardly relevant orchestration; our little passionate story drowns in a deep sea of descriptive eloquence or slipshod talk.

But again, we are rather more tempted to admit those particulars which we know we can describe; and hence those most of all which, having been described very often, have grown to be conventionally treated in the practice of our art. These we choose, as the mason chooses the acanthus to adorn his capital, because they come naturally to the accustomed hand. The old stock incidents and

accessories, tricks of workmanship and schemes of composition (all being admirably good, or they would long have been forgotten) haunt and tempt our fancy; offer us ready-made but not perfectly appropriate solutions for any problem that arises; and wean us from the study of nature and the uncompromising practice of art. To struggle, to face nature, to find fresh solutions, and give expression to facts which have not yet been adequately or not yet elegantly expressed, is to run a little upon the danger of extreme self-love. Difficulty sets a high price upon achievement; and the artist may easily fall into the error of the French naturalists, and consider any fact as welcome to admission if it be the ground of brilliant handiwork; or, again, into the error of the modern landscape-painter, who is apt to think that difficulty overcome and science well displayed can take the place of what is, after all, the one excuse and breath of art—charm. A little further, and he will regard charm in the light of an unworthy sacrifice to prettiness, and the omission of a tedious passage as an infidelity to art.

We have now the matter of this difference before us. The idealist, his eye singly fixed upon the greater outlines, loves rather to fill up the interval with detail of the conventional order, briefly touched, soberly suppressed in tone, courting neglect. But the realist, with a fine intemperance, will not suffer the presence of anything so dead as a convention; he shall have all fiery, all hot-pressed from nature, all charactered and notable, seizing the eye. The style that befits either of these extremes, once chosen, brings with it its necessary disabilities and dangers. The immediate danger of the realist is to sacrifice the beauty and significance of the whole to local dexterity, or, in the insane pursuit of completion, to immolate his readers under facts; but he comes in the last resort, and as his energy declines, to discard all design, abjure all choice, and, with scientific thoroughness, steadily to communicate matter which is not worth learning. The danger of the idealist is, of course, to become merely null and lose all grip of fact, particularity, or passion.

We talk of bad and good. Everything, indeed, is good which is conceived with honesty and executed with communicative ardour. But though on neither side is dogmatism fitting, and though in every case the artist must decide for himself, and decide afresh and yet afresh for each succeeding work and new creation ; yet one thing may be generally said, that we of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, breathing as we do the intellectual atmosphere of our age, are more apt to err upon the side of realism than to sin in quest of the ideal. Upon that theory it may be well to watch and correct our own decisions, always holding back the hand from the least appearance of irrelevant dexterity, and resolutely fixed to begin no work that is not philosophical, passionate, dignified, happily mirthful, or at the last and least, romantic in design.

III

ON SOME TECHNICAL ELEMENTS OF STYLE IN LITERATURE

THERE is nothing more disenchanting to man than to be shown the springs and mechanism of any art. All our arts and occupations lie wholly on the surface; it is on the surface that we perceive their beauty, fitness, and significance; and to pry below is to be appalled by their emptiness and shocked by the coarseness of the strings and pulleys. In a similar way, psychology itself, when pushed to any nicety, discovers an abhorrent baldness, but rather from the fault of our analysis than from any poverty native to the mind. And perhaps in æsthetics the reason is the same: those disclosures which seem fatal to the dignity of art seem so perhaps only in the proportion of our ignorance; and those conscious and unconscious artifices which it seems unworthy of the serious artist to employ were yet, if we had the power to trace them to their springs, indications of a delicacy of the sense finer than we conceive, and hints of ancient harmonies in nature. This ignorance at least is largely irremediable. We shall never learn the affinities of beauty, for they lie too deep in nature and too far back in the mysterious history of man. The amateur, in consequence, will always grudgingly receive details of method, which can be stated but can never wholly be explained; nay, on the principle laid down in Hudibras, that

> "Still the less they understand,
> The more they admire the sleight-of-hand,"

many are conscious at each new disclosure of a diminution in the ardour of their pleasure. I must therefore warn that well-known character, the general reader, that I am here embarked upon a most distasteful business: taking down the picture from the wall and looking on the back; and, like the inquiring child, pulling the musical cart to pieces.

1. *Choice of Words.*—The art of literature stands apart from among its sisters, because the material in which the literary artist works is the dialect of life; hence, on the one hand, a strange freshness and immediacy of address to the public mind, which is ready prepared to understand it; but hence, on the other, a singular limitation. The sister arts enjoy the use of a plastic and ductile material, like the modeller's clay; literature alone is condemned to work in mosaic with finite and quite rigid words. You have seen these blocks, dear to the nursery: this one a pillar, that a pediment, a third a window or a vase. It is with blocks of just such arbitrary size and figure that the literary architect is condemned to design the palace of his art. Nor is this all; for since these blocks, or words, are the acknowledged currency of our daily affairs, there are here possible none of those suppressions by which other arts obtain relief, continuity and vigour; no hieroglyphic touch, no smoothed impasto, no inscrutable shadow, as in painting; no blank wall, as in architecture; but every word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph must move in a logical progression, and convey a definite conventional import.

Now, the first merit which attracts in the pages of a good writer, or the talk of a brilliant conversationalist, is the apt choice and contrast of the words employed. It is, indeed, a strange art to take these blocks, rudely conceived for the purpose of the market or the bar, and by tact of application touch them to the finest meanings and distinctions, restore to them their primal energy, wittily shift them to another issue, or make of them a drum to rouse the passions. But though this form of merit is without doubt the most sensible and seizing, it is far from being equally present in all writers.

The effect of words in Shakespeare, their singular justice, significance, and poetic charm, is different, indeed, from the effect of words in Addison or Fielding. Or, to take an example nearer home, the words in Carlyle seem electrified into an energy of lineament, like the faces of men furiously moved ; whilst the words in Macaulay, apt enough to convey his meaning, harmonious enough in sound, yet glide from the memory like undistinguished elements in a general effect. But the first class of writers have no monopoly of literary merit. There is a sense in which Addison is superior to Carlyle ; a sense in which Cicero is better than Tacitus, in which Voltaire excels Montaigne : it certainly lies not in the choice of words ; it lies not in the interest or value of the matter ; it lies not in force of intellect, of poetry, or of humour. The three first are but infants to the three second ; and yet each, in a particular point of literary art, excels his superior in the whole. What is that point ?

2. *The Web.*—Literature, although it stands apart by reason of the great destiny and general use of its medium in the affairs of men, is yet an art like other arts. Of these we may distinguish two great classes : those arts, like sculpture, painting, acting, which are representative, or, as used to be said very clumsily, imitative ; and those, like architecture, music, and the dance, which are self-sufficient, and merely presentative. Each class, in right of this distinction, obeys principles apart ; yet both may claim a common ground of existence, and it may be said with sufficient justice that the motive and end of any art whatever is to make a pattern ; a pattern, it may be, of colours, of sounds, of changing attitudes, geometrical figures, or imitative lines ; but still a pattern. That is the plane on which these sisters meet ; it is by this that they are arts ; and if it be well they should at times forget their childish origin, addressing their intelligence to virile tasks, and performing unconsciously that necessary function of their life, to make a pattern, it is still imperative that the pattern shall be made.

Music and literature, the two temporal arts, contrive their pattern of sounds in time; or, in other words, of sounds and pauses. Communication may be made in broken words, the business of life be carried on with substantives alone; but that is not what we call literature; and the true business of the literary artist is to plait or weave his meaning, involving it around itself; so that each sentence, by successive phrases, shall first come into a kind of knot, and then, after a moment of suspended meaning, solve and clear itself. In every properly constructed sentence there should be observed this knot or hitch; so that (however delicately) we are led to foresee, to expect, and then to welcome the successive phrases. The pleasure may be heightened by an element of surprise, as, very grossly, in the common figure of the antithesis, or, with much greater subtlety, where an antithesis is first suggested and then deftly evaded. Each phrase, besides, is to be comely in itself; and between the implication and the evolution of the sentence there should be a satisfying equipoise of sound; for nothing more often disappoints the ear than a sentence solemnly and sonorously prepared, and hastily and weakly finished. Nor should the balance be too striking and exact, for the one rule is to be infinitely various; to interest, to disappoint, to surprise, and yet still to gratify; to be ever changing, as it were, the stitch, and yet still to give the effect of an ingenious neatness.

The conjurer juggles with two oranges, and our pleasure in beholding him springs from this, that neither is for an instant overlooked or sacrificed. So with the writer. His pattern, which is to please the supersensual ear, is yet addressed, throughout and first of all, to the demands of logic. Whatever be the obscurities, whatever the intricacies of the argument, the neatness of the fabric must not suffer, or the artist has been proved unequal to his design. And, on the other hand, no form of words must be selected, no knot must be tied among the phrases, unless knot and word be precisely what is wanted to forward and illuminate the

argument; for to fail in this is to swindle in the game. The genius of prose rejects the *cheville* no less emphatically than the laws of verse; and the *cheville*, I should perhaps explain to some of my readers, is any meaningless or very watered phrase employed to strike a balance in the sound. Pattern and argument live in each other; and it is by the brevity, clearness, charm, or emphasis of the second, that we judge the strength and fitness of the first.

Style is synthetic; and the artist, seeking, so to speak, a peg to plait about, takes up at once two or more elements or two or more views of the subject in hand; combines, implicates, and contrasts them; and while, in one sense, he was merely seeking an occasion for the necessary knot, he will be found, in the other, to have greatly enriched the meaning, or to have transacted the work of two sentences in the space of one. In the change from the successive shallow statements of the old chronicler to the dense and luminous flow of highly synthetic narrative, there is implied a vast amount of both philosophy and wit. The philosophy we clearly see, recognising in the synthetic writer a far more deep and stimulating view of life, and a far keener sense of the generation and affinity of events. The wit we might imagine to be lost; but it is not so, for it is just that wit, these perpetual nice contrivances, these difficulties overcome, this double purpose attained, these two oranges kept simultaneously dancing in the air, that, consciously or not, afford the reader his delight. Nay, and this wit, so little recognised, is the necessary organ of that philosophy which we so much admire. That style is therefore the most perfect, not, as fools say, which is the most natural, for the most natural is the disjointed babble of the chronicler; but which attains the highest degree of elegant and pregnant implication unobtrusively; or if obtrusively, then with the greatest gain to sense and vigour. Even the derangement of the phrases from their (so-called) natural order is luminous for the mind; and it is by the means of such designed reversal that the elements of a judgment may be

most pertinently marshalled, or the stages of a complicated action most perspicuously bound into one.

The web, then, or the pattern : a web at once sensuous and logical, an elegant and pregnant texture : that is style, that is the foundation of the art of literature. Books indeed continue to be read, for the interest of the fact or fable, in which this quality is poorly represented, but still it will be there. And, on the other hand, how many do we continue to peruse and reperuse with pleasure whose only merit is the elegance of texture ? I am tempted to mention Cicero ; and since Mr. Anthony Trollope is dead, I will. It is a poor diet for the mind, a very colourless and toothless " criticism of life " ; but we enjoy the pleasure of a most intricate and dexterous pattern, every stitch a model at once of elegance and of good sense ; and the two oranges, even if one of them be rotten, kept dancing with inimitable grace.

Up to this moment I have had my eye mainly upon prose ; for though in verse also the implication of the logical texture is a crowning beauty, yet in verse it may be dispensed with. You would think that here was a death-blow to all I have been saying ; and far from that, it is but a new illustration of the principle involved. For if the versifier is not bound to weave a pattern of his own, it is because another pattern has been formally imposed upon him by the laws of verse. For that is the essence of a prosody. Verse may be rhythmical ; it may be merely alliterative ; it may, like the French, depend wholly on the (quasi) regular recurrence of the rhyme ; or, like the Hebrew, it may consist in the strangely fanciful device of repeating the same idea. It does not matter on what principle the law is based, so it be a law. It may be pure convention ; it may have no inherent beauty ; all that we have a right to ask of any prosody is, that it shall lay down a pattern for the writer, and that what it lays down shall be neither too easy nor too hard. Hence it comes that it is much easier for men of equal facility to write fairly pleasing verse than reasonably

interesting prose ; for in prose the pattern itself has to be invented, and the difficulties first created before they can be solved. Hence, again, there follows the peculiar greatness of the true versifier : such as Shakespeare, Milton, and Victor Hugo, whom I place beside them as versifier merely, not as poet. These not only knit and knot the logical texture of the style with all the dexterity and strength of prose ; they not only fill up the pattern of the verse with infinite variety and sober wit ; but they give us, besides, a rare and special pleasure, by the art, comparable to that of counterpoint, with which they follow at the same time, and now contrast, and now combine, the double pattern of the texture and the verse. Here the sounding line concludes ; a little further on, the well-knit sentence ; and yet a little further, and both will reach their solution on the same ringing syllable. The best that can be offered by the best writer of prose is to show us the development of the idea and the stylistic pattern proceed hand in hand, sometimes by an obvious and triumphant effort, sometimes with a great air of ease and nature. The writer of verse, by virtue of conquering another difficulty, delights us with a new series of triumphs. He follows three purposes where his rival followed only two ; and the change is of precisely the same nature as that from melody to harmony. Or if you prefer to return to the juggler, behold him now, to the vastly increased enthusiasm of the spectators, juggling with three oranges instead of two. Thus it is : added difficulty, added beauty ; and the pattern, with every fresh element, becoming more interesting in itself.

Yet it must not be thought that verse is simply an addition ; something is lost as well as something gained ; and there remains plainly traceable, in comparing the best prose with the best verse, a certain broad distinction of method in the web. Tight as the versifier may draw the knot of logic, yet for the ear he still leaves the tissue of the sentence floating somewhat loose. In prose, the sentence turns upon a pivot, nicely balanced, and fits into itself with

an obtrusive neatness like a puzzle. The ear remarks and is singly gratified by this return and balance ; while in verse it is all diverted to the measure. To find comparable passages is hard ; for either the versifier is hugely the superior of the rival, or, if he be not, and still persist in his more delicate enterprise, he falls to be as widely his inferior. But let us select them from the pages of the same writer, one who was ambidexter ; let us take, for instance, Rumour's Prologue to the Second Part of *Henry IV.*, a fine flourish of eloquence in Shakespeare's second manner, and set it side by side with Falstaff's praise of sherris, act iv., scene 1 ; or let us compare the beautiful prose spoken throughout by Rosalind and Orlando, compare, for example, the first speech of all, Orlando's speech to Adam, with what passage it shall please you to select—the Seven Ages from the same play, or even such a stave of nobility as Othello's farewell to war ; and still you will be able to perceive, if you have any ear for that class of music, a certain superior degree of organisation in the prose ; a compacter fitting of the parts ; a balance in the swing and the return as of a throbbing pendulum. We must not, in things temporal, take from those who have little, the little that they have ; the merits of prose are inferior, but they are not the same ; it is a little kingdom, but an independent.

3. *Rhythm of the Phrase.*—Some way back, I used a word which still awaits an application. Each phrase, I said, was to be comely ; but what is a comely phrase ? In all ideal and material points, literature, being a representative art, must look for analogies to painting and the like ; but in what is technical and executive, being a temporal art, it must seek for them in music. Each phrase of each sentence, like an air or a recitative in music, should be so artfully compounded out of long and short, out of accented and unaccented, as to gratify the sensual ear. And of this the ear is the sole judge. It is impossible to lay down laws. Even in our accentual and rhythmic language no analysis can find the secret of the beauty of a verse ; how much less,

then, of those phrases, such as prose is built of, which obey no law but to be lawless and yet to please ? The little that we know of verse (and for my part I owe it all to my friend Professor Fleeming Jenkin) is, however, particularly interesting in the present connection. We have been accustomed to describe the heroic line as five iambic feet, and to be filled with pain and confusion whenever, as by the conscientious schoolboy, we have heard our own description put in practice.

"All nìght | the dreàd | less àn | gel ùn | pursùed,"[1]

goes the schoolboy ; but though we close our ears, we cling to our definition, in spite of its proved and naked insufficiency. Mr. Jenkin was not so easily pleased, and readily discovered that the heroic line consists of four groups, or, if you prefer the phrase, contains four pauses :

" All night | the dreadless | angel | unpursued."

Four groups, each practically uttered as one word : the first, in this case, an iamb ; the second, an amphibrachys ; the third, a trochee ; and the fourth an amphimacer ; and yet our schoolboy, with no other liberty but that of inflicting pain, had triumphantly scanned it as five iambs. Perceive, now, this fresh richness of intricacy in the web ; this fourth orange, hitherto unremarked, but still kept flying with the others. What had seemed to be one thing it now appears is two ; and, like some puzzle in arithmetic, the verse is made at the same time to read in fives and to read in fours.

But again, four is not necessary. We do not, indeed, find verses in six groups, because there is not room for six in the ten syllables ; and we do not find verses of two, because one of the main distinctions of verse from prose resides in the comparative shortness of the group ; but it is even common to find verses of three. Five is the one forbidden number ; because five is the number of the feet ; and if five were chosen, the two patterns would coincide, and

[1] Milton.

that opposition which is the life of verse would instantly be lost. We have here a clue to the effect of polysyllables, above all in Latin, where they are so common and make so brave an architecture in the verse ; for the polysyllable is a group of Nature's making. If but some Roman would return from Hades (Martial, for choice), and tell me by what conduct of the voice these thundering verses should be uttered —"*Aut Lacedæmonium Tarentum*," for a case in point—I feel as if I should enter at last into the full enjoyment of the best of human verses.

But, again, the five feet are all iambic, or supposed to be ; by the mere count of syllables the four groups cannot be all iambic ; as a question of elegance, I doubt if any one of them requires to be so ; and I am certain that for choice no two of them should scan the same. The singular beauty of the verse analysed above is due, so far as analysis can carry us, part, indeed, to the clever repetition of L, D and N, but part to this variety of scansion in the groups. The groups which, like the bar in music, break up the verse for utterance, fall uniambically ; and in declaiming a so-called iambic verse, it may so happen that we never utter one iambic foot. And yet to this neglect of the original beat there is a limit.

"Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts,"[1]

is, with all its eccentricities, a good heroic line ; for though it scarcely can be said to indicate the beat of the iamb, it certainly suggests no other measure to the ear. But begin

"Mother Athens, eye of Greece,"

or merely "Mother Athens," and the game is up, for the trochaic beat has been suggested. The eccentric scansion of the groups is an adornment ; but as soon as the original beat has been forgotten, they cease implicitly to be eccentric. Variety is what is sought ; but if we destroy the original mould, one of the terms of this variety is lost, and we fall

[1] Milton.

back on sameness. Thus, both as to the arithmetical measure of the verse, and the degree of regularity in scansion, we see the laws of prosody to have one common purpose: to keep alive the opposition of two schemes simultaneously followed; to keep them notably apart, though still coincident; and to balance them with such judicial nicety before the reader, that neither shall be unperceived and neither signally prevail.

The rule of rhythm in prose is not so intricate. Here, too, we write in groups, or phrases, as I prefer to call them, for the prose phrase is greatly longer and is much more nonchalantly uttered than the group in verse; so that not only is there a greater interval of continuous sound between the pauses, but, for that very reason, word is linked more readily to word by a more summary enunciation. Still, the phrase is the strict analogue of the group, and successive phrases, like successive groups, must differ openly in length and rhythm. The rule of scansion in verse is to suggest no measure but the one in hand; in prose, to suggest no measure at all. Prose must be rhythmical, and it may be as much so as you will; but it must not be metrical. It may be anything, but it must not be verse. A single heroic line may very well pass and not disturb the somewhat larger stride of the prose style; but one following another will produce an instant impression of poverty, flatness, and disenchantment. The same lines delivered with the measured utterance of verse would perhaps seem rich in variety. By the more summary enunciation proper to prose, as to a more distant vision, these niceties of difference are lost. A whole verse is uttered as one phrase; and the ear is soon wearied by a succession of groups identical in length. The prose writer, in fact, since he is allowed to be so much less harmonious, is condemned to a perpetually fresh variety of movement on a larger scale, and must never disappoint the ear by the trot of an accepted metre. And this obligation is the third orange with which he has to juggle, the third quality which the prose writer must work into his

pattern of words. It may be thought perhaps that this is a quality of ease rather than a fresh difficulty; but such is the inherently rhythmical strain of the English language, that the bad writer—and must I take for example that admired friend of my boyhood, Captain Reid?—the inexperienced writer, as Dickens in his earlier attempts to be impressive, and the jaded writer, as any one may see for himself, all tend to fall at once into the production of bad blank verse. And here it may be pertinently asked, Why bad? And I suppose it might be enough to answer that no man ever made good verse by accident, and that no verse can ever sound otherwise than trivial when uttered with the delivery of prose. But we can go beyond such answers. The weak side of verse is the regularity of the beat, which in itself is decidedly less impressive than the movement of the nobler prose; and it is just into this weak side, and this alone, that our careless writer falls. A peculiar density and mass, consequent on the nearness of the pauses, is one of the chief good qualities of verse; but this our accidental versifier, still following after the swift gait and large gestures of prose, does not so much as aspire to imitate. Lastly, since he remains unconscious that he is making verse at all, it can never occur to him to extract those effects of counterpoint and opposition which I have referred to as the final grace and justification of verse, and, I may add, of blank verse in particular.

4. *Contents of the Phrase.*—Here is a great deal of talk about rhythm—and naturally; for in our canorous language rhythm is always at the door. But it must not be forgotten that in some languages this element is almost, if not quite, extinct, and that in our own it is probably decaying. The even speech of many educated Americans sounds the note of danger. I should see it go with something as bitter as despair, but I should not be desperate. As in verse no element, not even rhythm, is necessary; so, in prose also, other sorts of beauty will arise and take the place and play the part of those that we outlive. The beauty of the

expected beat in verse, the beauty in prose of its larger and more lawless melody, patent as they are to English hearing, are already silent in the ears of our next neighbours; for in France the oratorical accent and the pattern of the web have almost or altogether succeeded to their places; and the French prose writer would be astounded at the labours of his brother across the Channel, and how a good quarter of his toil, above all *invita Minerva*, is to avoid writing verse. So wonderfully far apart have races wandered in spirit, and so hard it is to understand the literature next door!

Yet French prose is distinctly better than English; and French verse, above all while Hugo lives, it will not do to place upon one side. What is more to our purpose, a phrase or a verse in French is easily distinguishable as comely or uncomely. There is then another element of comeliness hitherto overlooked in this analysis: the contents of the phrase. Each phrase in literature is built of sounds, as each phrase in music consists of notes. One sound suggests, echoes, demands, and harmonises with another; and the art of rightly using these concordances is the final art in literature. It used to be a piece of good advice to all young writers to avoid alliteration; and the advice was sound, in so far as it prevented daubing. None the less for that, was it abominable nonsense, and the mere raving of those blindest of the blind who will not see? The beauty of the contents of a phrase, or of a sentence, depends implicitly upon alliteration and upon assonance. The vowel demands to be repeated; the consonant demands to be repeated; and both cry aloud to be perpetually varied. You may follow the adventures of a letter through any passage that has particularly pleased you; find it, perhaps, denied a while, to tantalise the ear; find it fired again at you in a whole broadside; or find it pass into congenerous sounds, one liquid or labial melting away into another. And you will find another and much stranger circumstance. Literature is written by and for two senses: a sort of internal ear, quick to perceive "unheard melodies"; and

the eye, which directs the pen and deciphers the printed phrase. Well, even as there are rhymes for the eye, so you will find that there are assonances and alliterations; that where an author is running the open A, deceived by the eye and our strange English spelling, he will often show a tenderness for the flat A; and that where he is running a particular consonant, he will not improbably rejoice to write it down even when it is mute or bears a different value.

Here, then, we have a fresh pattern—a pattern, to speak grossly, of letters—which makes the fourth preoccupation of the prose writer, and the fifth of the versifier. At times it is very delicate and hard to perceive, and then perhaps most excellent and winning (I say perhaps); but at times again the elements of this literal melody stand more boldly forward and usurp the ear. It becomes, therefore, somewhat a matter of conscience to select examples; and as I cannot very well ask the reader to help me, I shall do the next best by giving him the reason or the history of each selection. The two first, one in prose, one in verse, I chose without previous analysis, simply as engaging passages that had long re-echoed in my ear.

"I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat."[1] Down to "virtue," the current S and R are both announced and repeated unobtrusively, and by way of a grace-note that almost inseparable group PVF is given entire.[2] The next phrase is a period of repose, almost ugly in itself, both S and R still audible, and B given as the last fulfilment of PVF. In the next four phrases, from "that never"

[1] Milton.

[2] As PVF will continue to haunt us through our English examples, take, by way of comparison, this Latin verse, of which it forms a chief adornment, and do not hold me answerable for the all too Roman freedom of the sense: "Hanc volo, quæ facilis, quæ palliolata vagatur."

down to "run for," the mask is thrown off, and, but for a slight repetition of the F and V, the whole matter turns, almost too obtrusively, on S and R; first S coming to the front, and then R. In the concluding phrase all these favourite letters, and even the flat A, a timid preference for which is just perceptible, are discarded at a blow and in a bundle; and to make the break more obvious, every word ends with a dental, and all but one with T, for which we have been cautiously prepared since the beginning. The singular dignity of the first clause, and this hammer-stroke of the last, go far to make the charm of this exquisite sentence. But it is fair to own that S and R are used a little coarsely.

"In Xanadu did Kubla Khan	(KĂNDL)
A stately pleasure dome decree,	(KDLSR)
Where Alph the sacred river ran,	(KĂNDLSR)
Through caverns measureless to man,	(KĂNLSR)
Down to a sunless sea." [1]	(NDLS)

Here I have put the analysis of the main group alongside the lines; and the more it is looked at, the more interesting it will seem. But there are further niceties. In lines two and four, the current S is most delicately varied with Z. In line three, the current flat A is twice varied with the open A, already suggested in line two, and both times ("where" and "sacred") in conjunction with the current R. In the same line F and V (a harmony in themselves, even when shorn of their comrade P) are admirably contrasted. And in line four there is a marked subsidiary M, which again was announced in line two. I stop from weariness, for more might yet be said.

My next example was recently quoted from Shakespeare as an example of the poet's colour sense. Now, I do not think literature has anything to do with colour, or poets anyway the better of such a sense; and I instantly attacked this passage, since "purple" was the word that had so pleased the writer of the article, to see if there might not

[1] Coleridge.

be some literary reason for its use. It will be seen that I succeeded amply; and I am bound to say I think the passage exceptional in Shakespeare—exceptional, indeed, in literature; but it was not I who chose it.

> " The BARGE she sat IN, like a BURNished throne
> BURNT ON the water: the POOP was BEATEN gold,
> PURPLE the sails and so PUR*FUMÈD that *per
> The WINDS were lovesick with them." [1]

It may be asked why I have put the F of perfumèd in capitals; and I reply, because this change from P to F is the completion of that from B to P, already so adroitly carried out. Indeed, the whole passage is a monument of curious ingenuity; and it seems scarce worth while to indicate the subsidiary S, L and W. In the same article, a second passage from Shakespeare was quoted, once again as an example of his colour sense:

> " A mole cinque-spotted like the crimson drops
> I' the bottom of a cowslip." [2]

It is very curious, very artificial, and not worth while to analyse at length: I leave it to the reader. But before I turn my back on Shakespeare, I should like to quote a passage, for my own pleasure, and for a very model of every technical art:—

" But in the wind and tempest of her frown,	W. P. V. F. (st) (ow)[3]
Distinction with a loud and powerful fan,	W. P. F. (st) (ow) L
Puffing at all, winnowes the light away;	W. P. F. L
And what hath mass and matter by itself	W. F. L. M. Ă.
Lies rich in virtue and unmingled." [4]	V. L. M.

From these delicate and choice writers I turned with some curiosity to a player of the big drum—Macaulay. I had in hand the two-volume edition, and I opened at the beginning of the second volume. Here was what I read:—

" The violence of revolutions is generally proportioned to the degree of the maladministration which has produced them. It is

[1] *Antony and Cleopatra.*
[2] *Cymbeline.*
[3] The v is in " of."
[4] *Troilus and Cressida.*

therefore not strange that the government of Scotland, having been during many years greatly more corrupt than the government of England, should have fallen with a far heavier ruin. The movement against the last king of the house of Stuart was in England conservative, in Scotland destructive. The English complained not of the law, but of the violation of the law."

This was plain-sailing enough; it was our old friend PVF, floated by the liquids in a body; but as I read on, and turned the page, and still found PVF with his attendant liquids, I confess my mind misgave me utterly. This could be no trick of Macaulay's; it must be the nature of the English tongue. In a kind of despair, I turned half-way through the volume; and coming upon his lordship dealing with General Cannon, and fresh from Claverhouse and Killiekrankie, here, with elucidative spelling, was my reward:—

"Meanwhile the disorders of KANNON'S KAMP went on INKREASing. He KALLED a KOUNCIL of war to KONSIDER what KOURSE it would be advisable to TAKE. But as soon as the KOUNCIL had met a preliminary KUESTION was raised. The army was almost EKSKLUSIVELY a Highland army. The recent VIKTORY had been won EKSKLUSIVELY by Highland warriors. Great chiefs who had brought SIKS or seven hundred fighting men into the field, did not think it fair that they should be outvoted by gentlemen from Ireland and from the LOW KOUNTRIES, who bore indeed KING JAMES'S KOMMISSION, and were KALLED KOLONELS and KAPTAINS, but who were KOLONELS without regiments and KAPTAINS without KOMPANIES."

A moment of FV in all this world of K's! It was not the English language, then, that was an instrument of one string, but Macaulay that was an incomparable dauber.

It was probably from this barbaric love of repeating the same sound, rather than from any design of clearness, that he acquired his irritating habit of repeating words; I say the one rather than the other, because such a trick of the ear is deeper seated and more original in man than any logical consideration. Few writers, indeed, are probably conscious of the length to which they push this melody of letters. One, writing very diligently, and only concerned about the meaning of his words and the rhythm of his phrases, was struck into amazement by the eager triumph

with which he cancelled one expression to substitute another. Neither changed the sense; both being monosyllables, neither could affect the scansion; and it was only by looking back on what he had already written that the mystery was solved: the second word contained an open A, and for nearly half a page he had been riding that vowel to the death.

In practice, I should add, the ear is not always so exacting; and ordinary writers, in ordinary moments, content themselves with avoiding what is harsh, and here and there, upon a rare occasion, buttressing a phrase, or linking two together, with a patch of assonance or a momentary jingle of alliteration. To understand how constant is this preoccupation of good writers, even where its results are least obtrusive, it is only necessary to turn to the bad. There, indeed, you will find cacophony supreme, the rattle of incongruous consonants only relieved by the jaw-breaking hiatus, and whole phrases not to be articulated by the powers of man.

Conclusion.—We may now briefly enumerate the elements of style. We have, peculiar to the prose writer, the task of keeping his phrases large, rhythmical and pleasing to the ear, without ever allowing them to fall into the strictly metrical: peculiar to the versifier, the task of combining and contrasting his double, treble, and quadruple pattern, feet and groups, logic and metre—harmonious in diversity: common to both, the task of artfully combining the prime elements of language into phrases that shall be musical in the mouth; the task of weaving their argument into a texture of committed phrases and of rounded periods—but this particularly binding in the case of prose: and, again common to both, the task of choosing apt, explicit, and communicative words. We begin to see now what an intricate affair is any perfect passage; how many faculties, whether of taste or pure reason, must be held upon the stretch to make it; and why, when it is made, it should afford us so complete a pleasure. From the arrangement of

according letters, which is altogether arabesque and sensual, up to the architecture of the elegant and pregnant sentence, which is a vigorous act of the pure intellect, there is scarce a faculty in man but has been exercised. We need not wonder, then, if perfect sentences are rare, and perfect pages rarer.

IV

THE MORALITY OF THE PROFESSION OF LETTERS

The profession of letters has been lately debated in the public prints ; and it has been debated, to put the matter mildly, from a point of view that was calculated to surprise high-minded men, and bring a general contempt on books and reading. Some time ago, in particular, a lively, pleasant, popular writer[1] devoted an essay, lively and pleasant like himself, to a very encouraging view of the profession. We may be glad that his experience is so cheering, and we may hope that all others, who deserve it, shall be as handsomely rewarded ; but I do not think we need be at all glad to have this question, so important to the public and ourselves, debated solely on the ground of money. The salary in any business under heaven is not the only, nor indeed the first, question. That you should continue to exist is a matter for your own consideration ; but that your business should be first honest, and second useful, are points in which honour and morality are concerned. If the writer to whom I refer succeeds in persuading a number of young persons to adopt this way of life with an eye set singly on the livelihood, we must expect them in their works to follow profit only, and we must expect in consequence, if he will pardon me the epithets, a slovenly, base, untrue, and empty literature. Of that writer himself I am not speaking : he is diligent, clean, and pleasing ; we all owe him periods of entertainment, and he has achieved

[1] Mr. James Payn.

an amiable popularity which he has adequately deserved. But the truth is, he does not, or did not when he first embraced it, regard his profession from this purely mercenary side. He went into it, I shall venture to say, if not with any noble design, at least in the ardour of a first love ; and he enjoyed its practice long before he paused to calculate the wage. The other day an author was complimented on a piece of work, good in itself and exceptionally good for him, and replied in terms unworthy of a commercial traveller, that as the book was not briskly selling he did not give a copper farthing for its merit. It must not be supposed that the person to whom this answer was addressed received it as a profession of faith ; he knew, on the other hand, that it was only a whiff of irritation ; just as we know, when a respectable writer talks of literature as a way of life, like shoemaking, but not so useful, that he is only debating one aspect of a question, and is still clearly conscious of a dozen others more important in themselves and more central to the matter in hand. But while those who treat literature in this penny-wise and virtue-foolish spirit are themselves truly in possession of a better light, it does not follow that the treatment is decent or improving, whether for themselves or others. To treat all subjects in the highest, the most honourable, and the pluckiest spirit, consistent with the fact, is the first duty of a writer. If he be well paid, as I am glad to hear he is, this duty becomes the more urgent, the neglect of it the more disgraceful. And perhaps there is no subject on which a man should speak so gravely as that industry, whatever it may be, which is the occupation or delight of his life ; which is his tool to earn or serve with ; and which, if it be unworthy, stamps himself as a mere incubus of dumb and greedy bowels on the shoulders of labouring humanity. On that subject alone even to force the note might lean to virtue's side. It is to be hoped that a numerous and enterprising generation of writers will follow and surpass the present one ; but it would be better if the stream were stayed, and

the roll of our old, honest English books were closed, than that esurient bookmakers should continue and debase a brave tradition, and lower, in their own eyes, a famous race. Better that our serene temples were deserted than filled with trafficking and juggling priests.

There are two just reasons for the choice of any way of life: the first is inbred taste in the chooser; the second some high utility in the industry selected. Literature, like any other art, is singularly interesting to the artist; and, in a degree peculiar to itself among the arts, it is useful to mankind. These are the sufficient justifications for any young man or woman who adopts it as the business of his life. I shall not say much about the wages. A writer can live by his writing. If not so luxuriously as by other trades, then less luxuriously. The nature of the work he does all day will more affect his happiness than the quality of his dinner at night. Whatever be your calling, and however much it brings you in the year, you could still, you know, get more by cheating. We all suffer ourselves to be too much concerned about a little poverty; but such considerations should not move us in the choice of that which is to be the business and justification of so great a portion of our lives; and like the missionary, the patriot, or the philosopher, we should all choose that poor and brave career in which we can do the most and best for mankind. Now Nature, faithfully followed, proves herself a careful mother. A lad, for some liking to the jingle of words, betakes himself to letters for his life; by-and-by, when he learns more gravity, he finds that he has chosen better than he knew; that if he earns little, he is earning it amply; that if he receives a small wage, he is in a position to do considerable services; that it is in his power, in some small measure, to protect the oppressed and to defend the truth. So kindly is the world arranged, such great profit may arise from a small degree of human reliance on oneself, and such, in particular, is the happy star of this trade of writing, that it should combine pleasure and profit to both parties, and

be at once agreeable, like fiddling, and useful, like good preaching.

This is to speak of literature at its highest; and with the four great elders who are still spared to our respect and admiration, with Carlyle, Ruskin, Browning, and Tennyson before us, it would be cowardly to consider it at first in any lesser aspect. But while we cannot follow these athletes, while we may none of us, perhaps, be very vigorous, very original, or very wise, I still contend that, in the humblest sort of literary work, we have it in our power either to do great harm or great good. We may seek merely to please; we may seek, having no higher gift, merely to gratify the idle nine-days' curiosity of our contemporaries; or we may essay, however feebly, to instruct. In each of these we shall have to deal with that remarkable art of words which, because it is the dialect of life, comes home so easily and powerfully to the minds of men; and since that is so, we contribute, in each of these branches, to build up the sum of sentiments and appreciations which goes by the name of Public Opinion or Public Feeling. The total of a nation's reading, in these days of daily papers, greatly modifies the total of the nation's speech; and the speech and reading, taken together, form the efficient educational medium of youth. A good man or woman may keep a youth some little while in clearer air; but the contemporary atmosphere is all-powerful in the end on the average of mediocre characters. The copious Corinthian baseness of the American reporter or the Parisian *chroniqueur*, both so lightly readable, must exercise an incalculable influence for ill; they touch upon all subjects, and on all with the same ungenerous hand; they begin the consideration of all, in young and unprepared minds, in an unworthy spirit; on all, they supply some pungency for dull people to quote. The mere body of this ugly matter overwhelms the rarer utterances of good men; the sneering, the selfish, and the cowardly are scattered in broad sheets on every table, while the antidote,

in small volumes, lies unread upon the shelf. I have spoken of the American and the French, not because they are so much baser, but so much more readable, than the English; their evil is done more effectively, in America for the masses, in French for the few that care to read; but with us as with them, the duties of literature are daily neglected, truth daily perverted and suppressed, and grave subjects daily degraded in the treatment. The journalist is not reckoned an important officer; yet judge of the good he might do, the harm he does; judge of it by one instance only: that when we find two journals on the reverse sides of politics each, on the same day, openly garbling a piece of news for the interest of its own party, we smile at the discovery (no discovery now!) as over a good joke and pardonable stratagem. Lying so open is scarce lying, it is true; but one of the things that we profess to teach our young is a respect for truth; and I cannot think this piece of education will be crowned with any great success, so long as some of us practise and the rest openly approve of public falsehood.

There are two duties incumbent upon any man who enters on the business of writing: truth to the fact and a good spirit in the treatment. In every department of literature, though so low as hardly to deserve the name, truth to the fact is of importance to the education and comfort of mankind, and so hard to preserve, that the faithful trying to do so will lend some dignity to the man who tries it. Our judgments are based upon two things, first, upon the original preferences of our soul; but, second, upon the mass of testimony to the nature of God, man, and the universe which reaches us, in divers manners, from without. For the most part these divers manners are reducible to one, all that we learn of past times and much that we learn of our own reaching us through the medium of books or papers, and even he who cannot read learning from the same source at second-hand and by the report of him who can. Thus the sum of the contemporary

knowledge or ignorance of good and evil is, in large measure, the handiwork of those who write. Those who write have to see that each man's knowledge is, as near as they can make it, answerable to the facts of life ; that he shall not suppose himself an angel or a monster ; nor take this world for a hell ; nor be suffered to imagine that all rights are concentred in his own caste or country, or all veracities in his own parochial creed. Each man should learn what is within him, that he may strive to mend ; he must be taught what is without him, that he may be kind to others. It can never be wrong to tell him the truth ; for, in his disputable state, weaving as he goes his theory of life, steering himself, cheering or reproving others, all facts are of the first importance to his conduct ; and even if a fact shall discourage or corrupt him, it is still best that he should know it ; for it is in this world as it is, and not in a world made easy by educational suppressions, that he must win his way to shame or glory. In one word, it must always be foul to tell what is false ; and it can never be safe to suppress what is true. The very fact that you omit may be the fact which somebody was wanting, for one man's meat is another man's poison, and I have known a person who was cheered by the perusal of " Candide." Every fact is a part of that great puzzle we must set together ; and none that comes directly in a writer's path but has some nice relations, unperceivable by him, to the totality and bearing of the subject under hand. Yet there are certain classes of fact eternally more necessary than others, and it is with these that literature must first bestir itself. They are not hard to distinguish, nature once more easily leading us ; for the necessary, because the efficacious, facts are those which are most interesting to the natural mind of man. Those which are coloured, picturesque, human, and rooted in morality, and those, on the other hand, which are clear, indisputable, and a part of science, are alone vital in importance, seizing by their interest, or useful to communicate. So far as the

writer merely narrates, he should principally tell of these. He should tell of the kind and wholesome and beautiful elements of our life ; he should tell unsparingly of the evil and sorrow of the present, to move us with instances ; he should tell of wise and good people in the past, to excite us by example ; and of these he should tell soberly and truthfully, not glossing faults, that we may neither grow discouraged with ourselves nor exacting to our neighbours. So the body of contemporary literature, ephemeral and feeble in itself, touches in the minds of men the springs of thought and kindness, and supports them (for those who will go at all are easily supported) on their way to what is true and right. And if, in any degree, it does so now, how much more might it do so if the writers chose ! There is not a life in all the records of the past but, properly studied, might lend a hint and a help to some contemporary. There is not a juncture in to-day's affairs but some useful word may yet be said of it. Even the reporter has an office, and, with clear eyes and honest language, may unveil injustices and point the way to progress. And for a last word : in all narration there is only one way to be clever, and that is to be exact. To be vivid is a secondary quality which must presuppose the first ; for vividly to convey a wrong impression is only to make failure conspicuous.

But a fact may be viewed on many sides ; it may be chronicled with rage, tears, laughter, indifference, or admiration, and by each of these the story will be transformed to something else. The newspapers that told of the return of our representatives from Berlin, even if they had not differed as to the facts, would have sufficiently differed by their spirit ; so that the one description would have been a second ovation, and the other a prolonged insult. The subject makes but a trifling part of any piece of literature, and the view of the writer is itself a fact more important because less disputable than the others. Now this spirit in which a subject is regarded, important in all kinds of literary work, becomes all-important in works of

fiction, meditation, or rhapsody; for there it not only colours but itself chooses the facts; not only modifies but shapes the work. And hence, over the far larger proportion of the field of literature, the health or disease of the writer's mind or momentary humour forms not only the leading feature of his work, but is, at bottom, the only thing he can communicate to others. In all works of art, widely speaking, it is first of all the author's attitude that is narrated, though in the attitude there be implied a whole experience and a theory of life. An author who has begged the question and reposes in some narrow faith cannot, if he would, express the whole or even many of the sides of this various existence; for, his own life being maim, some of them are not admitted in his theory, and were only dimly and unwillingly recognised in his experience. Hence the smallness, the triteness, and the inhumanity in works of merely sectarian religion; and hence we find equal although unsimilar limitations in works inspired by the spirit of the flesh or the despicable taste for high society. So that the first duty of any man who is to write is intellectual. Designedly or not, he has so far set himself up for a leader of the minds of men; and he must see that his own mind is kept supple, charitable, and bright. Everything but prejudice should find a voice through him; he should see the good in all things; where he has even a fear that he does not wholly understand, there he should be wholly silent; and he should recognise from the first that he has only one tool in his workshop and that tool is sympathy.[1]

The second duty, far harder to define, is moral. There are a thousand different humours in the mind, and about each of them, when it is uppermost, some literature tends

[1] A footnote, at least, is due to the admirable example set before all young writers in the width of literary sympathy displayed by Mr. Swinburne. He runs forth to welcome merit, whether in Dickens or Trollope, whether in Villon, Milton, or Pope. This is, in criticism, the attitude we should all seek to preserve, not only in that, but in every branch of literary work.

to be deposited. Is this to be allowed? not certainly in every case, and yet perhaps in more than rigorists would fancy. It were to be desired that all literary work, and chiefly works of art, issued from sound, human, healthy, and potent impulses, whether grave or laughing, humorous, romantic, or religious. Yet it cannot be denied that some valuable books are partially insane; some, mostly religious, partially inhuman; and very many tainted with morbidity and impotence. We do not loathe a masterpiece although we gird against its blemishes. We are not, above all, to look for faults but merits. There is no book perfect, even in design; but there are many that will delight, improve, or encourage the reader. On the one hand, the Hebrew Psalms are the only religious poetry on earth; yet they contain sallies that savour rankly of the man of blood. On the other hand, Alfred de Musset had a poisoned and a contorted nature; I am only quoting that generous and frivolous giant, old Dumas, when I accuse him of a bad heart; yet, when the impulse under which he wrote was purely creative, he could give us works like "Carmosine" or "Fantasio," in which the last note of the romantic comedy seems to have been found again to touch and please us. When Flaubert wrote "Madame Bovary," I believe he thought chiefly of a somewhat morbid realism; and behold! the book turned in his hands into a masterpiece of appalling morality. But the truth is, when books are conceived under a great stress, with a soul of nine-fold power nine times heated and electrified by effort, the conditions of our being are seized with such an ample grasp, that, even should the main design be trivial or base, some truth and beauty cannot fail to be expressed. Out of the strong comes forth sweetness; but an ill thing poorly done is an ill thing top and bottom. And so this can be no encouragement to knock-knee'd, feeble-wristed scribes, who must take their business conscientiously or be ashamed to practise it.

Man is imperfect; yet, in his literature, he must express

himself and his own views and preferences; for to do anything else is to do a far more perilous thing than to risk being immoral: it is to be sure of being untrue. To ape a sentiment, even a good one, is to travesty a sentiment; that will not be helpful. To conceal a sentiment, if you are sure you hold it, is to take a liberty with truth. There is probably no point of view possible to a sane man but contains some truth and, in the true connection, might be profitable to the race. I am not afraid of the truth, if any one could tell it me, but I am afraid of parts of it impertinently uttered. There is a time to dance and a time to mourn; to be harsh as well as to be sentimental; to be ascetic as well as to glorify the appetites; and if a man were to combine all these extremes into his work, each in its place and proportion, that work would be the world's masterpiece of morality as well as of art. Partiality is immorality; for any book is wrong that gives a misleading picture of the world and life. The trouble is that the weakling must be partial; the work of one proving dank and depressing; of another, cheap and vulgar; of a third, epileptically sensual; of a fourth, sourly ascetic. In literature as in conduct, you can never hope to do exactly right. All you can do is to make as sure as possible; and for that there is but one rule. Nothing should be done in a hurry that can be done slowly. It is no use to write a book and put it by for nine or even ninety years; for in the writing you will have partly convinced yourself; the delay must precede any beginning; and if you meditate a work of art, you should first long roll the subject under the tongue to make sure you like the flavour, before you brew a volume that shall taste of it from end to end; or if you propose to enter on the field of controversy, you should first have thought upon the question under all conditions, in health as well as in sickness, in sorrow as well as in joy. It is this nearness of examination necessary for any true and kind writing, that makes the practice of the art a prolonged and noble education for the writer.

There is plenty to do, plenty to say, or to say over again, in the meantime. Any literary work which conveys faithful facts or pleasing impressions is a service to the public. It is even a service to be thankfully proud of having rendered. The slightest novels are a blessing to those in distress, not chloroform itself a greater. Our fine old sea-captain's life was justified when Carlyle soothed his mind with "The King's Own" or "Newton Forster." To please is to serve; and so far from its being difficult to instruct while you amuse, it is difficult to do the one thoroughly without the other. Some part of the writer or his life will crop out in even a vapid book; and to read a novel that was conceived with any force is to multiply experience and to exercise the sympathies. Every article, every piece of verse, every essay, every *entrefilet*, is destined to pass, however swiftly, through the minds of some portion of the public, and to colour, however transiently, their thoughts. When any subject falls to be discussed, some scribbler on a paper has the invaluable opportunity of beginning its discussion in a dignified and human spirit; and if there were enough who did so in our public press neither the public nor the parliament would find it in their minds to drop to meaner thoughts. The writer has the chance to stumble, by the way, on something pleasing, something interesting, something encouraging, were it only to a single reader. He will be unfortunate, indeed, if he suit no one. He has the chance, besides, to stumble on something that a dull person shall be able to comprehend; and for a dull person to have read anything and, for that once, comprehended it, makes a marking epoch in his education.

Here then is work worth doing and worth trying to do well. And so, if I were minded to welcome any great accession to our trade, it should not be from any reason of a higher wage, but because it was a trade which was useful in a very great and in a very high degree; which every honest tradesman could make more serviceable to

mankind in his single strength ; which was difficult to do well and possible to do better every year ; which called for scrupulous thought on the part of all who practised it, and hence became a perpetual education to their nobler natures ; and which, pay it as you please, in the large majority of the best cases will still be underpaid. For surely, at this time of day in the nineteenth century, there is nothing that an honest man should fear more timorously than getting and spending more than he deserves.

V

BOOKS WHICH HAVE INFLUENCED ME

THE Editor[1] has somewhat insidiously laid a trap for his correspondents, the question put appearing at first so innocent, truly cutting so deep. It is not, indeed, until after some reconnaissance and review that the writer awakes to find himself engaged upon something in the nature of autobiography, or, perhaps worse, upon a chapter in the life of that little, beautiful brother whom we once all had, and whom we have all lost and mourned, the man we ought to have been, the man we hoped to be. But when word has been passed (even to an editor), it should, if possible, be kept; and if sometimes I am wise and say too little, and sometimes weak and say too much, the blame must lie at the door of the person who entrapped me.

The most influential books, and the truest in their influence, are works of fiction. They do not pin the reader to a dogma, which he must afterwards discover to be inexact; they do not teach him a lesson, which he must afterwards unlearn. They repeat, they rearrange, they clarify the lessons of life; they disengage us from ourselves, they constrain us to the acquaintance of others; and they show us the web of experience, not as we can see it for ourselves, but with a singular change—that monstrous, consuming *ego* of ours being, for the nonce, struck out. To be so, they must be reasonably true to the human comedy; and any work that is so serves the turn of instruction. But the course of our education is answered best by those poems and romances where we breathe a magnanimous

[1] Of *The British Weekly*.

atmosphere of thought and meet generous and pious characters. Shakespeare has served me best. Few living friends have had upon me an influence so strong for good as Hamlet or Rosalind. The last character, already well beloved in the reading, I had the good fortune to see, I must think, in an impressionable hour, played by Mrs. Scott Siddons. Nothing has ever more moved, more delighted, more refreshed me ; nor has the influence quite passed away. Kent's brief speech over the dying Lear had a great effect upon my mind, and was the burthen of my reflections for long, so profoundly, so touchingly generous did it appear in sense, so overpowering in expression. Perhaps my dearest and best friend outside of Shakespeare is D'Artagnan—the elderly D'Artagnan of the " Vicomte de Bragelonne." I know not a more human soul, nor, in his way, a finer ; I shall be very sorry for the man who is so much of a pedant in morals that he cannot learn from the Captain of Musketeers. Lastly, I must name the " Pilgrim's Progress," a book that breathes of every beautiful and valuable emotion.

But of works of art little can be said ; their influence is profound and silent, like the influence of nature ; they mould by contact ; we drink them up like water, and are bettered, yet know not how. It is in books more specifically didactic that we can follow out the effect, and distinguish and weigh and compare. A book which has been very influential upon me fell early into my hands, and so may stand first, though I think its influence was only sensible later on, and perhaps still keeps growing, for it is a book not easily outlived : the " Essais " of Montaigne. That temperate and genial picture of life is a great gift to place in the hands of persons of to-day ; they will find in these smiling pages a magazine of heroism and wisdom, all of an antique strain ; they will have their " linen decencies " and excited orthodoxies fluttered, and will (if they have any gift of reading) perceive that these have not been fluttered without some excuse and ground of reason ;

and (again if they have any gift of reading) they will end by seeing that this old gentleman was in a dozen ways a finer fellow, and held in a dozen ways a nobler view of life, than they or their contemporaries.

The next book, in order of time, to influence me was the New Testament, and in particular the Gospel according to St. Matthew. I believe it would startle and move any one if they could make a certain effort of imagination and read it freshly like a book, not droningly and dully like a portion of the Bible. Any one would then be able to see in it those truths which we are all courteously supposed to know and all modestly refrain from applying. But upon this subject it is perhaps better to be silent.

I come next to Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," a book of singular service, a book which tumbled the world upside down for me, blew into space a thousand cobwebs of genteel and ethical illusion, and, having thus shaken my tabernacle of lies, set me back again upon a strong foundation of all the original and manly virtues. But it is, once more, only a book for those who have the gift of reading. I will be very frank—I believe it is so with all good books, except, perhaps, fiction. The average man lives, and must live, so wholly in convention, that gunpowder charges of the truth are more apt to discompose than to invigorate his creed. Either he cries out upon blasphemy and indecency, and crouches the closer round that little idol of part-truths and part-conveniences which is the contemporary deity, or he is convinced by what is new, forgets what is old, and becomes truly blasphemous and indecent himself. New truth is only useful to supplement the old; rough truth is only wanted to expand, not to destroy, our civil and often elegant conventions. He who cannot judge had better stick to fiction and the daily papers. There he will get little harm, and, in the first at least, some good.

Close upon the back of my discovery of Whitman, I came under the influence of Herbert Spencer. No more persuasive rabbi exists, and few better. How much of

his vast structure will bear the touch of time, how much is clay and how much brass, it were too curious to inquire. But his words, if dry, are always manly and honest ; there dwells in his pages a spirit of highly abstract joy, plucked naked like an algebraic symbol, but still joyful ; and the reader will find there a *caput-mortuum* of piety, with little indeed of its loveliness, but with most of its essentials ; and these two qualities make him a wholesome, as his intellectual vigour makes him a bracing, writer. I should be much of a hound if I lost my gratitude to Herbert Spencer.

" Goethe's Life," by Lewes, had a great importance for me when it first fell into my hands—a strange instance of the partiality of man's good and man's evil. I know no one whom I less admire than Goethe ; he seems a very epitome of the sins of genius, breaking open the doors of private life, and wantonly wounding friends, in that crowning offence of " Werther," and in his own character a mere pen-and-ink Napoleon, conscious of the rights and duties of superior talents as a Spanish inquisitor was conscious of the rights and duties of his office. And yet in his fine devotion to his art, in his honest and serviceable friendship for Schiller, what lessons are contained ! Biography, usually so false to its office, does here for once perform for us some of the work of fiction, reminding us, that is, of the truly mingled tissue of man's nature, and how huge faults and shining virtues cohabit and persevere in the same character. History serves us well to this effect, but in the originals, not in the pages of the popular epitomiser, who is bound, by the very nature of his task, to make us feel the difference of epochs instead of the essential identity of man, and even in the originals only to those who can recognise their own human virtues and defects in strange forms, often inverted and under strange names, often interchanged. Martial is a poet of no good repute, and it gives a man new thoughts to read his works dispassionately, and find in this unseemly jester's serious passages the image of a kind, wise, and self-respecting gentleman.

It is customary, I suppose, in reading Martial, to leave out these pleasant verses; I never heard of them, at least, until I found them for myself; and this partiality is one among a thousand things that help to build up our distorted and hysterical conception of the great Roman empire.

This brings us by a natural transition to a very noble book—the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius. The dispassionate gravity, the noble forgetfulness of self, the tenderness of others, that are there expressed and were practised on so great a scale in the life of its writer, make this book a book quite by itself. No one can read it and not be moved. Yet it scarcely or rarely appeals to the feelings—those very mobile, those not very trusty parts of man. Its address lies further back: its lesson comes more deeply home; when you have read, you carry away with you a memory of the man himself; it is as though you had touched a loyal hand, looked into brave eyes, and made a noble friend; there is another bond on you thenceforward, binding you to life and to the love of virtue.

Wordsworth should perhaps come next. Every one has been influenced by Wordsworth, and it is hard to tell precisely how. A certain innocence, a rugged austerity of joy, a sight of the stars, "the silence that is in the lonely hills," something of the cold thrill of dawn, cling to his work and give it a particular address to what is best in us. I do not know that you learn a lesson; you need not—Mill did not—agree with any one of his beliefs; and yet the spell is cast. Such are the best teachers; a dogma learned is only a new error—the old one was perhaps as good; but a spirit communicated is a perpetual possession. These best teachers climb beyond teaching to the plane of art; it is themselves, and what is best in themselves, that they communicate.

I should never forgive myself if I forgot "The Egoist." It is art, if you like, but it belongs purely to didactic art, and from all the novels I have read (and I have read

thousands) stands in a place by itself. Here is a Nathan for the modern David; here is a book to send the blood into men's faces. Satire, the angry picture of human faults, is not great art; we can all be angry with our neighbour; what we want is to be shown, not his defects, of which we are too conscious, but his merits, to which we are too blind. And "The Egoist" is a satire; so much must be allowed; but it is a satire of a singular quality, which tells you nothing of that obvious mote, which is engaged from first to last with that invisible beam. It is yourself that is hunted down; these are your own faults that are dragged into the day and numbered, with lingering relish, with cruel cunning and precision. A young friend of Mr. Meredith's (as I have the story) came to him in an agony. "This is too bad of you," he cried. "Willoughby is me!" "No, my dear fellow," said the author, "he is all of us." I have read "The Egoist" five or six times myself, and I mean to read it again; for I am like the young friend of the anecdote—I think Willoughby an unmanly but a very serviceable exposure of myself.

I suppose, when I am done, I shall find that I have forgotten much that was most influential, as I see already I have forgotten Thoreau, and Hazlitt, whose paper "On the Spirit of Obligations" was a turning-point in my life, and Penn, whose little book of aphorisms had a brief but strong effect on me, and Mitford's "Tales of Old Japan," wherein I learned for the first time the proper attitude of any rational man to his country's laws—a secret found, and kept, in the Asiatic islands. That I should commemorate all is more than I can hope or the editor could ask. It will be more to the point, after having said so much upon improving books, to say a word or two about the improvable reader. The gift of reading, as I have called it, is not very common, nor very generally understood. It consists, first of all, in a vast intellectual endowment—a free grace, I find I must call it—by which a man rises to understand that he is not punctually right, nor those from whom he differs absolutely

wrong. He may hold dogmas ; he may hold them passionately ; and he may know that others hold them but coldly, or hold them differently, or hold them not at all. Well, if he has the gift of reading, these others will be full of meat for him. They will see the other side of propositions and the other side of virtues. He need not change his dogma for that, but he may change his reading of that dogma, and he must supplement and correct his deductions from it. A human truth, which is always very much a lie, hides as much of life as it displays. It is men who hold another truth, or, as it seems to us, perhaps, a dangerous lie, who can extend our restricted field of knowledge, and rouse our drowsy consciences. Something that seems quite new, or that seems insolently false or very dangerous, is the test of a reader. If he tries to see what it means, what truth excuses it, he has the gift, and let him read. If he is merely hurt, or offended, or exclaims upon his author's folly, he had better take to the daily papers ; he will never be a reader.

And here, with the aptest illustrative force, after I have laid down my part-truth, I must step in with its opposite. For, after all, we are vessels of a very limited content. Not all men can read all books ; it is only in a chosen few that any man will find his appointed food ; and the fittest lessons are the most palatable, and make themselves welcome to the mind. A writer learns this early, and it is his chief support ; he goes on unafraid, laying down the law ; and he is sure at heart that most of what he says is demonstrably false, and much of a mingled strain, and some hurtful, and very little good for service ; but he is sure besides that when his words fall into the hands of any genuine reader, they will be weighed and winnowed, and only that which suits will be assimilated ; and when they fall into the hands of one who cannot intelligently read, they come there quite silent and inarticulate, falling upon deaf ears, and his secret is kept as if he had not written.

VI

THE DAY AFTER TO-MORROW

History is much decried ; it is a tissue of errors, we are told, no doubt correctly ; and rival historians expose each other's blunders with gratification. Yet the worst historian has a clearer view of the period he studies than the best of us can hope to form of that in which we live. The obscurest epoch is to-day ; and that for a thousand reasons of inchoate tendency, conflicting report, and sheer mass and multiplicity of experience ; but chiefly, perhaps, by reason of an insidious shifting of landmarks. Parties and ideas continually move, but not by measurable marches on a stable course ; the political soil itself steals forth by imperceptible degrees, like a travelling glacier, carrying on its bosom not only political parties but their flag-posts and cantonments ; so that what appears to be an eternal city founded on hills is but a flying island of Laputa. It is for this reason in particular that we are all becoming Socialists without knowing it ; by which I would not in the least refer to the acute case of Mr. Hyndman and his horn-blowing supporters, sounding their trumps of a Sunday within the walls of our individualist Jericho—but to the stealthy change that has come over the spirit of Englishmen and English legislation. A little while ago, and we were still for liberty ; "crowd a few more thousands on the bench of Government," we seemed to cry ; "keep her head direct on liberty, and we cannot help but come to port." This is over ; *laisser faire* declines in favour ; our legislation grows authoritative, grows philanthropical, bristles with new duties and new penalties, and casts a spawn of inspectors, who now begin, note-book in

hand, to darken the face of England. It may be right or wrong, we are not trying that; but one thing it is beyond doubt: it is Socialism in action, and the strange thing is that we scarcely know it.

Liberty has served us a long while, and it may be time to seek new altars. Like all other principles, she has been proved to be self-exclusive in the long run. She has taken wages besides (like all other virtues) and dutifully served Mammon; so that many things we were accustomed to admire as the benefits of freedom and common to all were truly benefits of wealth, and took their value from our neighbours' poverty. A few shocks of logic, a few disclosures (in the journalistic phrase) of what the freedom of manufacturers, landlords, or shipowners may imply for operatives, tenants or seamen, and we not unnaturally begin to turn to that other pole of hope, beneficent tyranny. Freedom, to be desirable, involves kindness, wisdom, and all the virtues of the free; but the free man as we have seen him in action has been, as of yore, only the master of many helots; and the slaves are still ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-taught, ill-housed, insolently treated, and driven to their mines and workshops by the lash of famine. So much, in other men's affairs, we have begun to see clearly; we have begun to despair of virtue in these other men, and from our seat in Parliament begin to discharge upon them, thick as arrows, the host of our inspectors. The landlord has long shaken his head over the manufacturer; those who do business on land have lost all trust in the virtues of the shipowner; the professions look askance upon the retail traders and have even started their co-operative stores to ruin them; and from out the smoke-wreaths of Birmingham a finger has begun to write upon the wall the condemnation of the landlord. Thus, piece by piece, do we condemn each other, and yet not perceive the conclusion, that our whole estate is somewhat damnable. Thus, piece by piece, each acting against his neighbour, each sawing away the branch on which some other interest is seated, do we apply in detail

our Socialistic remedies, and yet not perceive that we are all labouring together to bring in Socialism at large. A tendency so stupid and so selfish is like to prove invincible ; and if Socialism be at all a practicable rule of life, there is every chance that our grandchildren will see the day and taste the pleasures of existence in something far liker an ant-heap than any previous human polity. And this not in the least because of the voice of Mr. Hyndman or the horns of his followers ; but by the mere glacier movement of the political soil, bearing forward on its bosom, apparently undisturbed, the proud camps of Whig and Tory. If Mr. Hyndman were a man of keen humour, which is far from my conception of his character, he might rest from his troubling and look on : the walls of Jericho begin already to crumble and dissolve. That great servile war, the Armageddon of money and numbers, to which we looked forward when young, becomes more and more unlikely ; and we may rather look to see a peaceable and blindfold evolution, the work of dull men immersed in political tactics and dead to political results.

The principal scene of this comedy lies, of course, in the House of Commons ; it is there, besides, that the details of this new evolution (if it proceed) will fall to be decided ; so that the state of Parliament is not only diagnostic of the present but fatefully prophetic of the future. Well, we all know what Parliament is, and we are all ashamed of it. We may pardon it some faults, indeed, on the ground of Irish obstruction—a bitter trial, which it supports with notable good humour. But the excuse is merely local ; it cannot apply to similar bodies in America and France ; and what are we to say of these ? President Cleveland's letter may serve as a picture of the one ; a glance at almost any paper will convince us of the weakness of the other. Decay appears to have seized on the organ of popular government in every land ; and this just at the moment when we begin to bring to it, as to an oracle of justice, the whole skein of our private affairs to be unravelled, and ask it, like

a new Messiah, to take upon itself our frailties and play for us the part that should be played by our own virtues. For that, in few words, is the case. We cannot trust ourselves to behave with decency; we cannot trust our consciences; and the remedy proposed is to elect a round number of our neighbours, pretty much at random, and say to these: "Be ye our conscience; make laws so wise, and continue from year to year to administer them so wisely, that they shall save us from ourselves and make us righteous and happy, world without end. Amen." And who can look twice at the British Parliament and then seriously bring it such a task? I am not advancing this as an argument against Socialism; once again, nothing is further from my mind. There are great truths in Socialism, or no one, not even Mr. Hyndman, would be found to hold it; and if it came, and did one-tenth part of what it offers, I for one should make it welcome. But if it is to come, we may as well have some notion of what it will be like; and the first thing to grasp is that our new polity will be designed and administered (to put it courteously) with something short of inspiration. It will be made, or will grow, in a human parliament; and the one thing that will not very hugely change is human nature. The Anarchists think otherwise, from which it is only plain that they have not carried to the study of history the lamp of human sympathy.

Given, then, our new polity, with its new waggon-load of laws, what headmarks must we look for in the life? We chafe a good deal at that excellent thing, the income-tax, because it brings into our affairs the prying fingers, and exposes us to the tart words, of the official. The official, in all degrees, is already something of a terror to many of us. I would not willingly have to do with even a police-constable in any other spirit than that of kindness. I still remember in my dreams the eye-glass of a certain *attaché* at a certain embassy—an eye-glass that was a standing indignity to all on whom it looked; and my next most disagreeable remembrance is of a bracing, Republican

postman in the city of San Francisco. I lived in that city among working folk, and what my neighbours accepted at the postman's hands—nay, what I took from him myself—it is still distasteful to recall. The bourgeois, residing in the upper parts of society, has but few opportunities of tasting this peculiar bowl; but about the income-tax, as I have said, or perhaps about a patent, or in the halls of an embassy at the hands of my friend of the eye-glass, he occasionally sets his lips to it; and he may thus imagine (if he has that faculty of imagination, without which most faculties are void) how it tastes to his poorer neighbours who must drain it to the dregs. In every contact with authority, with their employer, with the police, with the School Board officer, in the hospital, or in the workhouse, they have equally the occasion to appreciate the light-hearted civility of the man in office; and as an experimentalist in several out-of-the-way provinces of life, I may say it has but to be felt to be appreciated. Well, this golden age of which we are speaking will be the golden age of officials. In all our concerns it will be their beloved duty to meddle, with what tact, with what obliging words, analogy will aid us to imagine. It is likely these gentlemen will be periodically elected; they will therefore have their turn of being underneath, which does not always sweeten men's conditions. The laws they will have to administer will be no clearer than those we know to-day, and the body which is to regulate their administration no wiser than the British Parliament. So that upon all hands we may look for a form of servitude most galling to the blood—servitude to many and changing masters, and for all the slights that accompany the rule of jack-in-office. And if the Socialistic programme be carried out with the least fulness, we shall have lost a thing, in most respects not much to be regretted, but as a moderator of oppression, a thing nearly invaluable—the newspaper. For the independent journal is a creature of capital and competition; it stands and falls with millionaires and railway bonds and all the abuses and glories of

to-day ; and as soon as the State has fairly taken its bent to authority and philanthropy, and laid the least touch on private property, the days of the independent journal are numbered. State railways may be good things and so may State bakeries ; but a State newspaper will never be a very trenchant critic of the State officials.

But again, these officials would have no sinecure. Crime would perhaps be less, for some of the motives of crime we may suppose would pass away. But if Socialism were carried out with any fulness, there would be more contraventions. We see already new sins springing up like mustard—School Board sins, factory sins, Merchant Shipping Act sins—none of which I would be thought to except against in particular, but all of which, taken together, show us that Socialism can be a hard master even in the beginning. If it go on to such heights as we hear proposed and lauded, if it come actually to its ideal of the ant-heap, ruled with iron justice, the number of new contraventions will be out of all proportion multiplied. Take the case of work alone. Man is an idle animal. He is at least as intelligent as the ant ; but generations of advisers have in vain recommended him the ant's example. Of those who are found truly indefatigable in business, some are misers ; some are the practisers of delightful industries, like gardening ; some are students, artists, inventors, or discoverers, men lured forward by successive hopes ; and the rest are those who live by games of skill or hazard—financiers, billiard-players, gamblers, and the like. But in unloved toils, even under the prick of necessity, no man is continually sedulous. Once eliminate the fear of starvation, once eliminate or bound the hope of riches, and we shall see plenty of skulking and malingering. Society will then be something not wholly unlike a cotton plantation in the old days ; with cheerful, careless, demoralised slaves, with elected overseers, and, instead of the planter, a chaotic popular assembly. If the blood be purposeful and the soil strong, such a plantation may succeed, and be, indeed,

a busy ant-heap, with full granaries and long hours of leisure. But even then I think the whip will be in the overseer's hands, and not in vain. For, when it comes to be a question of each man doing his own share or the rest doing more, prettiness of sentiment will be forgotten. To dock the skulker's food is not enough; many will rather eat haws and starve on petty pilferings than put their shoulder to the wheel for one hour daily. For such as these, then, the whip will be in the overseer's hand; and his own sense of justice and the superintendence of a chaotic popular assembly will be the only checks on its employment. Now, you may be an industrious man and a good citizen, and yet not love, nor yet be loved by, Dr. Fell the inspector. It is admitted by private soldiers that the disfavour of a sergeant is an evil not to be combated; offend the sergeant, they say, and in a brief while you will either be disgraced or have deserted. And the sergeant can no longer appeal to the lash. But if these things go on, we shall see, or our sons shall see, what it is to have offended an inspector.

This for the unfortunate. But with the fortunate also, even those whom the inspector loves, it may not be altogether well. It is concluded that in such a state of society, supposing it to be financially sound, the level of comfort will be high. It does not follow: there are strange depths of idleness in man, a too-easily-got sufficiency, as in the case of the sago-eaters, often quenching the desire for all besides; and it is possible that the men of the richest ant-heaps may sink even into squalor. But suppose they do not; suppose our tricksy instrument of human nature, when we play upon it this new tune, should respond kindly; suppose no one to be damped and none exasperated by the new conditions, the whole enterprise to be financially sound—a vaulting supposition—and all the inhabitants to dwell together in a golden mean of comfort: we have yet to ask ourselves if this be what man desire, or if it be what man will even deign to accept for a continuance. It

is certain that man loves to eat, it is not certain that he loves that only or that best. He is supposed to love comfort ; it is not a love, at least, that he is faithful to. He is supposed to love happiness ; it is my contention that he rather loves excitement. Danger, enterprise, hope, the novel, the aleatory, are dearer to man than regular meals. He does not think so when he is hungry, but he thinks so again as soon as he is fed ; and on the hypothesis of a successful ant-heap, he would never go hungry. It would be always after dinner in that society, as, in the land of the Lotos-eaters, it was always afternoon ; and food, which, when we have it not, seems all-important, drops in our esteem, as soon as we have it, to a mere pre-requisite of living.

That for which man lives is not the same thing for all individuals nor in all ages ; yet it has a common base ; what he seeks and what he must have is that which will seize and hold his attention. Regular meals and weather-proof lodgings will not do this long. Play in its wide sense, as the artificial induction of sensation, including all games and all arts, will, indeed, go far to keep him conscious of himself ; but in the end he wearies for realities. Study or experiment, to some rare natures, is the unbroken pastime of a life. These are enviable natures ; people shut in the house by sickness often bitterly envy them ; but the commoner man cannot continue to exist upon such altitudes : his feet itch for physical adventure ; his blood boils for physical dangers, pleasures, and triumphs ; his fancy, the looker after new things, cannot continue to look for them in books and crucibles, but must seek them on the breathing stage of life. Pinches, buffets, the glow of hope, the shock of disappointment, furious contention with obstacles : these are the true elixir for all vital spirits, these are what they seek alike in their romantic enterprises and their unromantic dissipations. When they are taken in some pinch closer than the common, they cry, " Catch me here again ! " and sure enough you catch them there

again—perhaps before the week is out. It is as old as "Robinson Crusoe"; as old as man. Our race has not been strained for all these ages through that sieve of dangers that we call Natural Selection, to sit down with patience in the tedium of safety; the voices of its fathers call it forth. Already in our society as it exists, the bourgeois is too much cottoned about for any zest in living; he sits in his parlour out of reach of any danger, often out of reach of any vicissitude but one of health; and there he yawns. If the people in the next villa took pot-shots at him, he might be killed indeed, but so long as he escaped he would find his blood oxygenated and his views of the world brighter. If Mr. Mallock, on his way to the publishers, should have his skirts pinned to a wall by a javelin, it would not occur to him—at least for several hours—to ask if life were worth living; and if such peril were a daily matter, he would ask it never more; he would have other things to think about, he would be living indeed—not lying in a box with cotton, safe, but immeasurably dull. The aleatory, whether it touch life, or fortune, or renown—whether we explore Africa or only toss for halfpence—that is what I conceive men to love best, and that is what we are seeking to exclude from men's existences. Of all forms of the aleatory, that which most commonly attends our working men—the danger of misery from want of work—is the least inspiriting: it does not whip the blood, it does not evoke the glory of contest; it is tragic, but it is passive; and yet, in so far as it is aleatory, and a peril sensibly touching them, it does truly season the men's lives. Of those who fail, I do not speak—despair should be sacred; but to those who even modestly succeed, the changes of their life bring interest: a job found, a shilling saved, a dainty earned, all these are wells of pleasure springing afresh for the successful poor; and it is not from these but from the villa-dweller that we hear complaints of the unworthiness of life. Much, then, as the average of the proletariat would gain in this new state of life, they would also lose a certain

something, which would not be missed in the beginning, but would be missed progressively and progressively lamented. Soon there would be a looking back: there would be tales of the old world humming in young men's ears, tales of the tramp and the pedlar, and the hopeful emigrant. And in the stall-fed life of the successful ant-heap—with its regular meals, regular duties, regular pleasures, an even course of life, and fear excluded—the vicissitudes, delights, and havens of to-day will seem of epic breadth. This may seem a shallow observation; but the springs by which men are moved lie much on the surface. Bread, I believe, has always been considered first, but the circus comes close upon its heels. Bread we suppose to be given amply; the cry for circuses will be the louder, and if the life of our descendants be such as we have conceived, there are two beloved pleasures on which they will be likely to fall back: the pleasures of intrigue and of sedition.

In all this I have supposed the ant-heap to be financially sound. I am no economist, only a writer of fiction; but even as such, I know one thing that bears on the economic question—I know the imperfection of man's faculty for business. The Anarchists, who count some rugged elements of common-sense among what seem to me their tragic errors, have said upon this matter all that I could wish to say, and condemned beforehand great economical polities. So far it is obvious that they are right; they may be right also in predicting a period of communal independence, and they may even be right in thinking that desirable. But the rise of communes is none the less the end of economic equality, just when we were told it was beginning. Communes will not be all equal in extent, nor in quality of soil, nor in growth of population; nor will the surplus produce of all be equally marketable. It will be the old story of competing interests, only with a new unit; and, as it appears to me, a new, inevitable danger. For the merchant and the manufacturer, in this new world, will be a sovereign commune; it is a sovereign power that will see

its crops undersold, and its manufactures worsted in the market. And all the more dangerous that the sovereign power should be small. Great powers are slow to stir; national affronts, even with the aid of newspapers, filter slowly into popular consciousness; national losses are so unequally shared, that one part of the population will be counting its gains while another sits by a cold hearth. But in the sovereign commune all will be centralised and sensitive. When jealousy springs up, when (let us say) the commune of Poole has overreached the commune of Dorchester, irritation will run like quicksilver throughout the body politic; each man in Dorchester will have to suffer directly in his diet and his dress; even the secretary, who drafts the official correspondence, will sit down to his task embittered, as a man who has dined ill and may expect to dine worse; and thus a business difference between communes will take on much the same colour as a dispute between diggers in the lawless West, and will lead as directly to the arbitrament of blows. So that the establishment of the communal system will not only reintroduce all the injustices and heart-burnings of economic inequality, but will, in all human likelihood, inaugurate a world of hedge-row warfare. Dorchester will march on Poole, Sherborne on Dorchester, Wimborne on both; the waggons will be fired on as they follow the highway, the trains wrecked on the lines, the ploughman will go armed into the field of tillage; and if we have not a return of ballad literature, the local press at least will celebrate in a high vein the victory of Cerne Abbas or the reverse of Toller Porcorum. At least this will not be dull; when I was younger, I could have welcomed such a world with relief; but it is the New-Old with a vengeance, and irresistibly suggests the growth of military powers and the foundation of new empires.

VII

LETTER TO A YOUNG GENTLEMAN WHO PROPOSES TO EMBRACE THE CAREER OF ART

With the agreeable frankness of youth, you address me on a point of some practical importance to yourself and (it is even conceivable) of some gravity to the world: Should you or should you not become an artist? It is one which you must decide entirely for yourself; all that I can do is to bring under your notice some of the materials of that decision; and I will begin, as I shall probably conclude also, by assuring you that all depends on the vocation.

To know what you like is the beginning of wisdom and of old age. Youth is wholly experimental. The essence and charm of that unquiet and delightful epoch is ignorance of self as well as ignorance of life. These two unknowns the young man brings together again and again, now in the airiest touch, now with a bitter hug; now with exquisite pleasure, now with cutting pain; but never with indifference, to which he is a total stranger, and never with that near kinsman of indifference, contentment. If he be a youth of dainty senses or a brain easily heated, the interest of this series of experiments grows upon him out of all proportion to the pleasure he receives. It is not beauty that he loves, nor pleasure that he seeks, though he may think so; his design and his sufficient reward is to verify his own existence and taste the variety of human fate. To him, before the razor-edge of curiosity is dulled, all that is not actual living and the hot chase of experience wears a

face of a disgusting dryness difficult to recall in later days ; or if there be any exception—and here destiny steps in—it is in those moments when, wearied or surfeited of the primary activity of the senses, he calls up before memory the image of transacted pains and pleasures. Thus it is that such an one shies from all cut-and-dry professions, and inclines insensibly toward that career of art which consists only in the tasting and recording of experience.

This, which is not so much a vocation for art as an impatience of all other honest trades, frequently exists alone ; and, so existing, it will pass gently away in the course of years. Emphatically, it is not to be regarded ; it is not a vocation, but a temptation ; and when your father the other day so fiercely and (in my view) so properly discouraged your ambition, he was recalling not improbably some similar passage in his own experience. For the temptation is perhaps nearly as common as the vocation is rare. But again we have vocations which are imperfect ; we have men whose minds are bound up, not so much in any art, as in the general *ars artium* and common base of all creative work ; who will now dip into painting, and now study counterpoint, and anon will be inditing a sonnet : all these with equal interest, all often with genuine knowledge. And of this temper, when it stands alone, I find it difficult to speak ; but I should counsel such an one to take to letters, for in literature (which drags with so wide a net) all his information may be found some day useful, and if he should go on as he has begun, and turn at last into the critic, he will have learned to use the necessary tools. Lastly we come to those vocations which are at once decisive and precise ; to the men who are born with the love of pigments, the passion of drawing, the gift of music, or the impulse to create with words, just as other and perhaps the same men are born with the love of hunting, or the sea, or horses, or the turning-lathe. These are predestined ; if a man love the labour of any trade, apart from any question of success or fame, the gods have called

him. He may have the general vocation too : he may have a taste for all the arts, and I think he often has ; but the mark of his calling is this laborious partiality for one, this inextinguishable zest in its technical successes, and (perhaps above all) a certain candour of mind, to take his very trifling enterprise with a gravity that would befit the cares of empire, and to think the smallest improvement worth accomplishing at any expense of time and industry. The book, the statue, the sonata, must be gone upon with the unreasoning good faith and the unflagging spirit of children at their play. *Is it worth doing?*—when it shall have occurred to any artist to ask himself that question, it is implicitly answered in the negative. It does not occur to the child as he plays at being a pirate on the dining-room sofa, nor to the hunter as he pursues his quarry ; and the candour of the one and the ardour of the other should be united in the bosom of the artist.

If you recognise in yourself some such decisive taste, there is no room for hesitation : follow your bent. And observe (lest I should too much discourage you) that the disposition does not usually burn so brightly at the first, or rather not so constantly. Habit and practice sharpen gifts ; the necessity of toil grows less disgusting, grows even welcome, in the course of years ; a small taste (if it be only genuine) waxes with indulgence into an exclusive passion. Enough, just now, if you can look back over a fair interval, and see that your chosen art has a little more than held its own among the thronging interests of youth. Time will do the rest, if devotion help it ; and soon your every thought will be engrossed in that beloved occupation.

But even with devotion, you may remind me, even with unfaltering and delighted industry, many thousand artists spend their lives, if the result be regarded, utterly in vain : a thousand artists, and never one work of art. But the vast mass of mankind are incapable of doing anything reasonably well, art among the rest. The worthless artist

would not improbably have been a quite incompetent baker. And the artist, even if he does not amuse the public, amuses himself; so that there will always be one man the happier for his vigils. This is the practical side of art: its inexpugnable fortress for the true practitioner. The direct returns—the wages of the trade—are small, but the indirect—the wages of the life—are incalculably great. No other business offers a man his daily bread upon such joyful terms. The soldier and the explorer have moments of a worthier excitement, but they are purchased by cruel hardships and periods of tedium that beggar language. In the life of the artist there need be no hour without its pleasure. I take the author, with whose career I am best acquainted; and it is true he works in a rebellious material, and that the act of writing is cramped and trying both to the eyes and the temper; but remark him in his study when matter crowds upon him and words are not wanting —in what a continual series of small successes time flows by; with what a sense of power, as of one moving mountains, he marshals his petty characters; with what pleasures, both of the ear and eye, he sees his airy structure growing on the page; and how he labours in a craft to which the whole material of his life is tributary, and which opens a door to all his tastes, his loves, his hatreds, and his convictions, so that what he writes is only what he longed to utter. He may have enjoyed many things in this big, tragic playground of the world; but what shall he have enjoyed more fully than a morning of successful work? Suppose it ill-paid: the wonder is it should be paid at all. Other men pay, and pay dearly, for pleasures less desirable.

Nor will the practice of art afford you pleasure only; it affords besides an admirable training. For the artist works entirely upon honour. The public knows little or nothing of those merits in the quest of which you are condemned to spend the bulk of your endeavours. Merits of design, the merit of first-hand energy, the merit of a

certain cheap accomplishment which a man of the artistic temper easily acquires—these they can recognise, and these they value. But to those more exquisite refinements of proficiency and finish, which the artist so ardently desires and so keenly feels, for which (in the vigorous words of Balzac) he must toil "like a miner buried in a landslip," for which, day after day, he recasts and revises and rejects —the gross mass of the public must be ever blind. To those lost pains, suppose you attain the highest pitch of merit, posterity may possibly do justice; suppose, as is so probable, you fail by even a hair's breadth of the highest, rest certain they shall never be observed. Under the shadow of this cold thought, alone in his studio, the artist must preserve from day to day his constancy to the ideal. It is this which makes his life noble; it is by this that the practice of his craft strengthens and matures his character; it is for this that even the serious countenance of the great emperor was turned approvingly (if only for a moment) on the followers of Apollo, and that sternly gentle voice bade the artist cherish his art.

And here there fall two warnings to be made. First, if you are to continue to be a law to yourself, you must beware of the first signs of laziness. This idealism in honesty can only be supported by perpetual effort; the standard is easily lowered, the artist who says "*It will do,*" is on the downward path; three or four pot-boilers are enough at times (above all at wrong times) to falsify a talent, and by the practice of journalism a man runs the risk of becoming wedded to cheap finish. This is the danger on the one side; there is not less upon the other. The consciousness of how much the artist is (and must be) a law to himself debauches the small heads. Perceiving recondite merits very hard to attain, making or swallowing artistic formulæ, or perhaps falling in love with some particular proficiency of his own, many artists forget the end of all art: to please. It is doubtless tempting to exclaim against the ignorant bourgeois; yet it should not be for-

gotten, it is he who is to pay us, and that (surely on the face of it) for services that he shall desire to have performed. Here also, if properly considered, there is a question of transcendental honesty. To give the public what they do not want, and yet expect to be supported : we have there a strange pretension, and yet not uncommon, above all with painters. The first duty in this world is for a man to pay his way ; when that is quite accomplished, he may plunge into what eccentricity he likes ; but emphatically not till then. Till then, he must pay assiduous court to the bourgeois who carries the purse. And if in the course of these capitulations he shall falsify his talent, it can never have been a strong one, and he will have preserved a better thing than talent—character. Or if he be of a mind so independent that he cannot stoop to this necessity, one course is yet open : he can desist from art, and follow some more manly way of life.

I speak of a more manly way of life ; it is a point on which I must be frank. To live by a pleasure is not a high calling ; it involves patronage, however veiled ; it numbers the artist, however ambitious, along with dancing girls and billiard-markers. The French have a romantic evasion for one employment, and call its practitioners the Daughters of Joy. The artist is of the same family, he is of the Sons of Joy, chose his trade to please himself, gains his livelihood by pleasing others, and has parted with something of the sterner dignity of man. Journals but a little while ago declaimed against the Tennyson peerage ; and this Son of Joy was blamed for condescension when he followed the example of Lord Lawrence and Lord Cairns and Lord Clyde. The poet was more happily inspired ; with a better modesty he accepted the honour ; and anonymous journalists have not yet (if I am to believe them) recovered the vicarious disgrace to their profession. When it comes to their turn, these gentlemen can do themselves more justice ; and I shall be glad to think of it ; for to my barbarian eyesight, even Lord Tennyson looks somewhat out of place

in that assembly. There should be no honours for the artist; he has already, in the practice of his art, more than his share of the rewards of life ; the honours are pre-empted for other trades, less agreeable and perhaps more useful.

But the devil in these trades of pleasing is to fail to please. In ordinary occupations, a man offers to do a certain thing or to produce a certain article with a merely conventional accomplishment, a design in which (we may almost say) it is difficult to fail. But the artist steps forth out of the crowd and proposes to delight : an impudent design, in which it is impossible to fail without odious circumstances. The poor Daughter of Joy, carrying her smiles and finery quite unregarded through the crowd, makes a figure which it is impossible to recall without a wounding pity. She is the type of the unsuccessful artist. The actor, the dancer, and the singer must appear like her in person, and drain publicly the cup of failure. But though the rest of us escape this crowning bitterness of the pillory, we all court in essence the same humiliation. We all profess to be able to delight. And how few of us are ! We all pledge ourselves to be able to continue to delight. And the day will come to each, and even to the most admired, when the ardour shall have declined and the cunning shall be lost, and he shall sit by his deserted booth ashamed. Then shall he see himself condemned to do work for which he blushes to take payment. Then (as if his lot were not already cruel) he must lie exposed to the gibes of the wreckers of the press, who earn a little bitter bread by the condemnation of trash which they have not read, and the praise of excellence which they cannot understand.

And observe that this seems almost the necessary end at least of writers. " Les Blancs et les Bleus " (for instance) is of an order of merit very different from " Le Vicomte de Bragelonne " ; and if any gentleman can bear to spy upon the nakedness of " Castle Dangerous," his name I think is Ham : let it be enough for the rest of us to read of it (not

without tears) in the pages of Lockhart. Thus in old age, when occupation and comfort are most needful, the writer must lay aside at once his pastime and his breadwinner. The painter indeed, if he succeed at all in engaging the attention of the public, gains great sums and can stand to his easel until a great age without dishonourable failure. The writer has the double misfortune to be ill-paid while he can work, and to be incapable of working when he is old. It is thus a way of life which conducts directly to a false position.

For the writer (in spite of notorious examples to the contrary) must look to be ill-paid. Tennyson and Montépin make handsome livelihoods ; but we cannot all hope to be Tennyson, and we do not all perhaps desire to be Montépin. If you adopt an art to be your trade, weed your mind at the outset of all desire of money. What you may decently expect, if you have some talent and much industry, is such an income as a clerk will earn with a tenth or perhaps a twentieth of your nervous output. Nor have you the right to look for more ; in the wages of the life, not in the wages of the trade, lies your reward ; the work is here the wages. It will be seen I have little sympathy with the common lamentations of the artist class. Perhaps they do not remember the hire of the field labourer ; or do they think no parallel will lie ? Perhaps they have never observed what is the retiring allowance of a field officer ; or do they suppose their contributions to the arts of pleasing more important than the services of a colonel ? Perhaps they forget on how little Millet was content to live ; or do they think, because they have less genius, they stand excused from the display of equal virtues ? But upon one point there should be no dubiety : if a man be not frugal, he has no business in the arts. If he be not frugal, he steers directly for that last tragic scene of *le vieux saltimbanque ;* if he be not frugal, he will find it hard to continue to be honest. Some day, when the butcher is knocking at the door, he may be tempted, he may be obliged, to turn out

and sell a slovenly piece of work. If the obligation shall have arisen through no wantonness of his own, he is even to be commended ; for words cannot describe how far more necessary it is that a man should support his family, than that he should attain to—or preserve—distinction in the arts. But if the pressure comes through his own fault, he has stolen, and stolen under trust, and stolen (which is the worst of all) in such a way that no law can reach him.

And now you may perhaps ask me whether—if the débutant artist is to have no thought of money, and if (as is implied) he is to expect no honours from the State—he may not at least look forward to the delights of popularity ? Praise, you will tell me, is a savoury dish. And in so far as you may mean the countenance of other artists, you would put your finger on one of the most essential and enduring pleasures of the career of art. But in so far as you should have an eye to the commendations of the public or the notice of the newspapers, be sure you would but be cherishing a dream. It is true that in certain esoteric journals the author (for instance) is duly criticised, and that he is often praised a great deal more than he deserves, sometimes for qualities which he prided himself on eschewing, and sometimes by ladies and gentlemen who have denied themselves the privilege of reading his work. But if a man be sensitive to this wild praise, we must suppose him equally alive to that which often accompanies and always follows it—wild ridicule. A man may have done well for years, and then he may fail ; he will hear of his failure. Or he may have done well for years, and still do well, but the critics may have tired of praising him, or there may have sprung up some new idol of the instant, some " dust a little gilt," to whom they now prefer to offer sacrifice. Here is the obverse and the reverse of that empty and ugly thing called popularity. Will any man suppose it worth the gaining ?

VIII

PULVIS ET UMBRA

We look for some reward of our endeavours and are disappointed ; not success, not happiness, not even peace of conscience, crowns our ineffectual efforts to do well. Our frailties are invincible, our virtues barren ; the battle goes sore against us to the going down of the sun. The canting moralist tells us of right and wrong ; and we look abroad, even on the face of our small earth, and find them change with every climate, and no country where some action is not honoured for a virtue and none where it is not branded for a vice ; and we look in our experience, and find no vital congruity in the wisest rules, but at the best a municipal fitness. It is not strange if we are tempted to despair of good. We ask too much. Our religions and moralities have been trimmed to flatter us, till they are all emasculate and sentimentalised, and only please and weaken. Truth is of a rougher strain. In the harsh face of life, faith can read a bracing gospel. The human race is a thing more ancient than the ten commandments ; and the bones and revolutions of the Kosmos, in whose joints we are but moss and fungus, more ancient still.

I

Of the Kosmos in the last resort, science reports many doubtful things, and all of them appalling. There seems no substance to this solid globe on which we stamp : nothing but symbols and ratios. Symbols and ratios carry us and

bring us forth and beat us down ; gravity, that swings the incommensurable suns and worlds through space, is but a figment varying inversely as the squares of distances ; and the suns and worlds themselves, imponderable figures of abstraction, NH_3 and H_2O. Consideration dares not dwell upon this view ; that way madness lies ; science carries us into zones of speculation, where there is no habitable city for the mind of man.

But take the Kosmos with a grosser faith, as our senses give it us. We behold space sown with rotatory islands, suns and worlds and the shards and wrecks of systems : some, like the sun, still blazing ; some rotting, like the earth ; others, like the moon, stable in desolation. All of these we take to be made of something we call matter : a thing which no analysis can help us to conceive ; to whose incredible properties no familiarity can reconcile our minds. This stuff, when not purified by the lustration of fire, rots uncleanly into something we call life ; seized through all its atoms with a pediculous malady ; swelling in tumours that become independent, sometimes even (by an abhorrent prodigy) locomotory ; one splitting into millions, millions cohering into one, as the malady proceeds through varying stages. This vital putrescence of the dust, used as we are to it, yet strikes us with occasional disgust, and the profusion of worms in a piece of ancient turf, or the air of a marsh darkened with insects, will sometimes check our breathing so that we aspire for cleaner places. But none is clean : the moving sand is infected with lice ; the pure spring, where it bursts out of the mountain, is a mere issue of worms ; even in the hard rock the crystal is forming.

In two main shapes this eruption covers the countenance of the earth : the animal and the vegetable : one in some degree the inversion of the other : the second rooted to the spot ; the first coming detached out of its natal mud, and scurrying abroad with the myriad feet of insects or towering into the heavens on the wings of birds : a thing so inconceivable that, if it be well considered, the heart

stops. To what passes with the anchored vermin, we have little clue: doubtless they have their joys and sorrows, their delights and killing agonies: it appears not how. But of the locomotory, to which we ourselves belong, we can tell more. These share with us a thousand miracles: the miracles of sight, of hearing, of the projection of sound, things that bridge space; the miracles of memory and reason, by which the present is conceived, and, when it is gone, its image kept living in the brains of man and brute; the miracle of reproduction, with its imperious desires and staggering consequences. And to put the last touch upon this mountain mass of the revolting and the inconceivable, all these prey upon each other, lives tearing other lives in pieces, cramming them inside themselves, and by that summary process, growing fat: the vegetarian, the whale, perhaps the tree, not less than the lion of the desert; for the vegetarian is only the eater of the dumb.

Meanwhile our rotary island loaded with predatory life, and more drenched with blood, both animal and vegetable, than ever mutinied ship, scuds through space with unimaginable speed, and turns alternate cheeks to the reverberation of a blazing world, ninety million miles away.

II

What a monstrous spectre is this man, the disease of the agglutinated dust, lifting alternate feet or lying drugged with slumber; killing, feeding, growing, bringing forth small copies of himself; grown upon with hair like grass, fitted with eyes that move and glitter in his face; a thing to set children screaming;—and yet looked at nearlier, known as his fellows know him, how surprising are his attributes! Poor soul, here for so little, cast among so many hardships, filled with desires so incommensurate and so inconsistent, savagely surrounded, savagely descended, irremediably condemned to prey upon his fellow lives: who

should have blamed him had he been of a piece with his destiny and a being merely barbarous? And we look and behold him instead filled with imperfect virtues: infinitely childish, often admirably valiant, often touchingly kind; sitting down, amidst his momentary life, to debate of right and wrong and the attributes of the Deity; rising up to do battle for an egg or die for an idea; singling out his friends and his mate with cordial affection; bringing forth in pain, rearing with long-suffering solicitude, his young. To touch the heart of his mystery, we find in him one thought, strange to the point of lunacy: the thought of duty; the thought of something owing to himself, to his neighbour, to his God: an ideal of decency, to which he would rise if it were possible; a limit of shame, below which, if it be possible, he will not stoop. The design in most men is one of conformity; here and there, in picked natures, it transcends itself and soars on the other side, arming martyrs with independence; but in all, in their degrees, it is a bosom thought:—Not in man alone, for we trace it in dogs and cats whom we know fairly well, and doubtless some similar point of honour sways the elephant, the oyster, and the louse, of whom we know so little:—But in man, at least, it sways with so complete an empire that merely selfish things come second, even with the selfish: that appetites are starved, fears are conquered, pains supported; that almost the dullest shrinks from the reproof of a glance, although it were a child's; and all but the most cowardly stand amid the risks of war; and the more noble, having strongly conceived an act as due to their ideal, affront and embrace death. Strange enough if, with their singular origin and perverted practice, they think they are to be rewarded in some future life: stranger still, if they are persuaded of the contrary, and think this blow, which they solicit, will strike them senseless for eternity. I shall be reminded what a tragedy of misconception and misconduct man at large presents: of organised injustice, cowardly violence and treacherous crime; and of the

damning imperfections of the best. They cannot be too darkly drawn. Man is indeed marked for failure in his efforts to do right. But where the best consistently miscarry, how tenfold more remarkable that all should continue to strive: and surely we should find it both touching and inspiriting, that in a field from which success is banished, our race should not cease to labour.

If the first view of this creature, stalking in his rotatory isle, be a thing to shake the courage of the stoutest, on this nearer sight he startles us with an admiring wonder. It matters not where we look, under what climate we observe him, in what stage of society, in what depth of ignorance, burthened with what erroneous morality; by camp-fires in Assiniboia, the snow powdering his shoulders, the wind plucking his blanket, as he sits, passing the ceremonial calumet and uttering his grave opinions like a Roman senator; in ships at sea, a man inured to hardship and vile pleasures, his brightest hope a fiddle in a tavern and a bedizened trull who sells herself to rob him, and he, for all that, simple, innocent, cheerful, kindly like a child, constant to toil, brave to drown, for others; in the slums of cities, moving among indifferent millions to mechanical employments, without hope of change in the future, with scarce a pleasure in the present, and yet true to his virtues, honest up to his lights, kind to his neighbours, tempted perhaps in vain by the bright gin-palace, perhaps long-suffering with the drunken wife that ruins him; in India (a woman this time) kneeling with broken cries and streaming tears, as she drowns her child in the sacred river; in the brothel, the discard of society, living mainly on strong drink, fed with affronts, a fool, a thief, the comrade of thieves, and even here keeping the point of honour and the touch of pity, often repaying the world's scorn with service, often standing firm upon a scruple, and at a certain cost, rejecting riches:—everywhere some virtue cherished or affected, everywhere some decency of thought and carriage, everywhere the ensign of man's ineffectual goodness:—ah! if I could show you

this! if I could show you these men and women, all the world over, in every stage of history, under every abuse of error, under every circumstance of failure, without hope, without help, without thanks, still obscurely fighting the lost fight of virtue, still clinging, in the brothel or on the scaffold, to some rag of honour, the poor jewel of their souls! They may seek to escape, and yet they cannot; it is not alone their privilege and glory, but their doom; they are condemned to some nobility; all their lives long, the desire of good is at their heels, the implacable hunter.

Of all earth's meteors, here at least is the most strange and consoling: that this ennobled lemur, this hair-crowned bubble of the dust, this inheritor of a few years and sorrows, should yet deny himself his rare delights, and add to his frequent pains, and live for an ideal, however misconceived. Nor can we stop with man. A new doctrine, received with screams a little while ago by canting moralists, and still not properly worked into the body of our thoughts, lights us a step farther into the heart of this rough but noble universe. For nowadays the pride of man denies in vain his kinship with the original dust. He stands no longer like a thing apart. Close at his heels we see the dog, prince of another genus: and in him, too, we see dumbly testified the same cultus of an unattainable ideal, the same constancy in failure. Does it stop with the dog? We look at our feet where the ground is blackened with the swarming ant; a creature so small, so far from us in the hierarchy of brutes, that we can scarce trace and scarce comprehend his doings; and here also, in his ordered polities and rigorous justice, we see confessed the law of duty and the fact of individual sin. Does it stop, then, with the ant? Rather this desire of welldoing and this doom of frailty run through all the grades of life: rather is this earth, from the frosty top of Everest to the next margin of the internal fire, one stage of ineffectual virtues and one temple of pious tears and perseverance. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together. It is the common and the god-like law of life.

The browsers, the biters, the barkers, the hairy coats of field and forest, the squirrel in the oak, the thousand-footed creeper in the dust, as they share with us the gift of life, share with us the love of an ideal: strive like us—like us are tempted to grow weary of the struggle—to do well; like us receive at times unmerited refreshment, visitings of support, returns of courage; and are condemned like us to be crucified between that double law of the members and the will. Are they like us, I wonder, in the timid hope of some reward, some sugar with the drug? do they, too, stand aghast at unrewarded virtues, at the sufferings of those whom, in our partiality, we take to be just, and the prosperity of such as, in our blindness, we call wicked? It may be, and yet God knows what they should look for. Even while they look, even while they repent, the foot of man treads them by thousands in the dust, the yelping hounds burst upon their trail, the bullet speeds, the knives are heating in the den of the vivisectionist; or the dew falls, and the generation of a day is blotted out. For these are creatures, compared with whom our weakness is strength, our ignorance wisdom, our brief span eternity.

And as we dwell, we living things, in our isle of terror and under the imminent hand of death, God forbid it should be man the erected, the reasoner, the wise in his own eyes —God forbid it should be man that wearies in welldoing, that despairs of unrewarded effort, or utters the language of complaint. Let it be enough for faith, that the whole creation groans in mortal frailty, strives with unconquerable constancy: Surely not all in vain.

IX

A CHRISTMAS SERMON

By the time this paper appears, I shall have been talking for twelve months ;[1] and it is thought I should take my leave in a formal and seasonable manner. Valedictory eloquence is rare, and death-bed sayings have not often hit the mark of the occasion. Charles Second, wit and sceptic, a man whose life had been one long lesson in human incredulity, an easy-going comrade, a manœuvring king—remembered and embodied all his wit and scepticism along with more than his usual good humour in the famous " I am afraid, gentlemen, I am an unconscionable time a-dying."

I

An unconscionable time a-dying—there is the picture (" I am afraid, gentlemen,") of your life and of mine. The sands run out, and the hours are " numbered and imputed," and the days go by ; and when the last of these finds us, we have been a long time dying, and what else ? The very length is something, if we reach that hour of separation undishonoured ; and to have lived at all is doubtless (in the soldierly expression) to have served. There is a tale in Tacitus of how the veterans mutinied in the German wilderness ; of how they mobbed Germanicus, clamouring to go home ; and of how, seizing their general's hand, these old, war-worn exiles passed his finger along their toothless gums. *Sunt lacrymæ rerum :* this was the most eloquent

[1] *i.e.* in the pages of *Scribner's Magazine* (1888).

of the songs of Simeon. And when a man has lived to a fair age, he bears his marks of service. He may have never been remarked upon the breach at the head of the army ; at least he shall have lost his teeth on the camp bread.

The idealism of serious people in this age of ours is of a noble character. It never seems to them that they have served enough ; they have a fine impatience of their virtues. It were perhaps more modest to be singly thankful that we are no worse. It is not only our enemies, those desperate characters—it is we ourselves who know not what we do ; —thence springs the glimmering hope that perhaps we do better than we think : that to scramble through this random business with hands reasonably clean, to have played the part of a man or woman with some reasonable fulness, to have often resisted the diabolic, and at the end to be still resisting it, is for the poor human soldier to have done right well. To ask to see some fruit of our endeavour is but a transcendental way of serving for reward ; and what we take to be contempt of self is only greed of hire.

And again if we require so much of ourselves, shall we not require much of others ? If we do not genially judge our own deficiencies, is it not to be feared we shall be even stern to the trespasses of others ? And he who (looking back upon his own life) can see no more than that he has been unconscionably long a-dying, will he not be tempted to think his neighbour unconscionably long of getting hanged ? It is probable that nearly all who think of conduct at all, think of it too much ; it is certain we all think too much of sin. We are not damned for doing wrong, but for not doing right ; Christ would never hear of negative morality ; *thou shalt* was ever His word, with which He superseded *thou shalt not.* To make our idea of morality centre on forbidden acts is to defile the imagination and to introduce into our judgments of our fellow-men a secret element of gusto. If a thing is wrong for us, we should not dwell upon the thought of it ; or we shall soon dwell upon it with inverted pleasure. If we cannot drive it from our minds

—one thing of two : either our creed is in the wrong and we must more indulgently remodel it ; or else, if our morality be in the right, we are criminal lunatics and should place our persons in restraint. A mark of such unwholesomely divided minds is the passion for interference with others : the Fox without the Tail was of this breed, but had (if his biographer is to be trusted) a certain antique civility now out of date. A man may have a flaw, a weakness, that unfits him for the duties of life, that spoils his temper, that threatens his integrity, or that betrays him into cruelty. It has to be conquered ; but it must never be suffered to engross his thoughts. The true duties lie all upon the further side, and must be attended to with a whole mind so soon as this preliminary clearing of the decks has been effected. In order that he may be kind and honest, it may be needful he should become a total abstainer ; let him become so then, and the next day let him forget the circumstance. Trying to be kind and honest will require all his thoughts ; a mortified appetite is never a wise companion ; in so far as he has had to mortify an appetite, he will still be the worse man ; and of such an one a great deal of cheerfulness will be required in judging life, and a great deal of humility in judging others.

It may be argued again that dissatisfaction with our life's endeavour springs in some degree from dulness. We require higher tasks, because we do not recognise the height of those we have. Trying to be kind and honest seems an affair too simple and too inconsequential for gentlemen of our heroic mould ; we had rather set ourselves to something bold, arduous, and conclusive ; we had rather found a schism or suppress a heresy, cut off a hand or mortify an appetite. But the task before us, which is to co-endure with our existence, is rather one of microscopic fineness, and the heroism required is that of patience. There is no cutting of the Gordian knots of life ; each must be smilingly unravelled.

To be honest, to be kind—to earn a little and to spend

a little less, to make upon the whole a family happier for his presence, to renounce when that shall be necessary and not be embittered, to keep a few friends, but these without capitulation—above all, on the same grim condition, to keep friends with himself—here is a task for all that a man has of fortitude and delicacy. He has an ambitious soul who would ask more; he has a hopeful spirit who should look in such an enterprise to be successful. There is indeed one element in human destiny that not blindness itself can controvert: whatever else we are intended to do, we are not intended to succeed; failure is the fate allotted. It is so in every art and study; it is so above all in the continent art of living well. Here is a pleasant thought for the year's end or for the end of life: Only self-deception will be satisfied, and there need be no despair for the despairer.

II

But Christmas is not only the mile-mark of another year, moving us to thoughts of self-examination: it is a season, from all its associations, whether domestic or religious, suggesting thoughts of joy. A man dissatisfied with his endeavours is a man tempted to sadness. And in the midst of the winter, when his life runs lowest and he is reminded of the empty chairs of his beloved, it is well he should be condemned to this fashion of the smiling face. Noble disappointment, noble self-denial, are not to be admired, not even to be pardoned, if they bring bitterness. It is one thing to enter the kingdom of heaven maim; another to maim yourself and stay without. And the kingdom of heaven is of the childlike, of those who are easy to please, who love and who give pleasure. Mighty men of their hands, the smiters and the builders and the judges, have lived long and done sternly and yet preserved this lovely character; and among our carpet interests and

twopenny concerns, the shame were indelible if *we* should lose it. Gentleness and cheerfulness, these come before all morality; they are the perfect duties. And it is the trouble with moral men that they have neither one nor other. It was the moral man, the Pharisee, whom Christ could not away with. If your morals make you dreary, depend upon it they are wrong. I do not say "give them up," for they may be all you have; but conceal them like a vice, lest they should spoil the lives of better and simpler people.

A strange temptation attends upon man: to keep his eye on pleasures, even when he will not share in them; to aim all his morals against them. This very year a lady (singular iconoclast!) proclaimed a crusade against dolls; and the racy sermon against lust is a feature of the age. I venture to call such moralists insincere. At any excess or perversion of a natural appetite, their lyre sounds of itself with relishing denunciations; but for all displays of the truly diabolic—envy, malice, the mean lie, the mean silence, the calumnious truth, the backbiter, the petty tyrant, the peevish poisoner of family life—their standard is quite different. These are wrong, they will admit, yet somehow not so wrong; there is no zeal in their assault on them, no secret element of gusto warms up the sermon; it is for things not wrong in themselves that they reserve the choicest of their indignation. A man may naturally disclaim all moral kinship with the Reverend Mr. Zola or the hobgoblin old lady of the dolls; for these are gross and naked instances. And yet in each of us some similar element resides. The sight of a pleasure in which we cannot or else will not share moves us to a particular impatience. It may be because we are envious, or because we are sad, or because we dislike noise and romping—being so refined, or because—being so philosophic—we have an overweighing sense of life's gravity: at least, as we go on in years, we are all tempted to frown upon our neighbour's pleasures. People are nowadays so fond of resisting temptations; here

is one to be resisted. They are fond of self-denial; here is a propensity that cannot be too peremptorily denied. There is an idea abroad among moral people that they should make their neighbours good. One person I have to make good: myself. But my duty to my neighbour is much more nearly expressed by saying that I have to make him happy—if I may.

III

Happiness and goodness, according to canting moralists, stand in the relation of effect and cause. There was never anything less proved or less probable: our happiness is never in our own hands; we inherit our constitution; we stand buffet among friend and enemies; we may be so built as to feel a sneer or an aspersion with unusual keenness, and so circumstanced as to be unusually exposed to them; we may have nerves very sensitive to pain, and be afflicted with a disease very painful. Virtue will not help us, and it is not meant to help us. It is not even its own reward, except for the self-centred and—I had almost said—the unamiable. No man can pacify his conscience; if quiet be what he want, he shall do better to let that organ perish from disuse. And to avoid the penalties of the law, and the minor *capitis diminutio* of social ostracism, is an affair of wisdom—of cunning, if you will—and not of virtue.

In his own life, then, a man is not to expect happiness, only to profit by it gladly when it shall arise; he is on duty here; he knows not how or why, and does not need to know; he knows not for what hire, and must not ask. Somehow or other, though he does not know what goodness is, he must try to be good; somehow or other, though he cannot tell what will do it, he must try to give happiness to others. And no doubt there comes in here a frequent clash of duties. How far is he to make his neighbour happy? How far must he respect that smiling face, so

easy to cloud, so hard to brighten again? And how far, on the other side, is he bound to be his brother's keeper and the prophet of his own morality? How far must he resent evil?

The difficulty is that we have little guidance; Christ's sayings on the point being hard to reconcile with each other, and (the most of them) hard to accept. But the truth of His teaching would seem to be this: in our own person and fortune, we should be ready to accept and to pardon all; it is *our* cheek we are to turn, *our* coat that we are to give away to the man who has taken *our* cloak. But when another's face is buffeted, perhaps a little of the lion will become us best. That we are to suffer others to be injured, and stand by, is not conceivable, and surely not desirable. Revenge, says Bacon, is a kind of wild justice; its judgments at least are delivered by an insane judge; and in our own quarrel we can see nothing truly and do nothing wisely. But in the quarrel of our neighbour, let us be more bold. One person's happiness is as sacred as another's; when we cannot defend both, let us defend one with a stout heart. It is only in so far as we are doing this, that we have any right to interfere: the defence of B is our only ground of action against A. A has as good a right to go to the devil as we to go to glory; and neither knows what he does.

The truth is that all these interventions and denunciations and militant mongerings of moral half-truths, though they be sometimes needful, though they are often enjoyable, do yet belong to an inferior grade of duties. Ill-temper and envy and revenge find here an arsenal of pious disguises; this is the playground of inverted lusts. With a little more patience and a little less temper, a gentler and wiser method might be found in almost every case; and the knot that we cut by some fine heady quarrel-scene in private life, or, in public affairs, by some denunciatory act against what we are pleased to call our neighbour's vices, might yet have been unwoven by the hand of sympathy.

IV

To look back upon the past year, and see how little we have striven, and to what small purpose; and how often we have been cowardly and hung back, or temerarious and rushed unwisely in; and how every day and all day long we have transgressed the law of kindness;—it may seem a paradox, but in the bitterness of these discoveries a certain consolation resides. Life is not designed to minister to a man's vanity. He goes upon his long business most of the time with a hanging head, and all the time like a blind child. Full of rewards and pleasures as it is—so that to see the day break or the moon rise, or to meet a friend, or to hear the dinner-call when he is hungry, fills him with surprising joys—this world is yet for him no abiding city. Friendships fall through, health fails, weariness assails him; year after year he must thumb the hardly varying record of his own weakness and folly. It is a friendly process of detachment. When the time comes that he should go, there need be few illusions left about himself. *Here lies one who meant well, tried a little, failed much*:—surely that may be his epitaph, of which he need not be ashamed. Nor will he complain at the summons which calls a defeated soldier from the field: defeated, ay, if he were Paul or Marcus Aurelius!—but if there is still one inch of fight in his old spirit, undishonoured. The faith which sustained him in his lifelong blindness and lifelong disappointment will scarce even be required in this last formality of laying down his arms. Give him a march with his old bones; there, out of the glorious sun-coloured earth, out of the day and the dust and the ecstasy—there goes another Faithful Failure!

From a recent book of verse, where there is more than one such beautiful and manly poem, I take this memorial piece: it says better than I can, what I love to think; let it be our parting word:—

> "A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;
> And from the west,

Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content,
There falls on the old, grey city
An influence luminous and serene,
A shining peace.

"The smoke ascends
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires
Shine, and are changed. In the valley
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,
Closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night—
Night, with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.

"So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death." [1]

[1] From "A Book of Verses," by William Ernest Henley. D. Nutt, 1888.

X

FATHER DAMIEN

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE REVEREND DR. HYDE OF HONOLULU

SYDNEY, *February* 25, 1890.

SIR,—It may probably occur to you that we have met, and visited, and conversed; on my side, with interest. You may remember that you have done me several courtesies, for which I was prepared to be grateful. But there are duties which come before gratitude, and offences which justly divide friends, far more acquaintances. Your letter to the Reverend H. B. Gage is a document which, in my sight, if you had filled me with bread when I was starving, if you had sat up to nurse my father when he lay a-dying, would yet absolve me from the bonds of gratitude. You know enough, doubtless, of the process of canonisation to be aware that, a hundred years after the death of Damien, there will appear a man charged with the painful office of the *devil's advocate*. After that noble brother of mine, and of all frail clay, shall have lain a century at rest, one shall accuse, one defend him. The circumstance is unusual that the devil's advocate should be a volunteer, should be a member of a sect immediately rival, and should make haste to take upon himself his ugly office ere the bones are cold; unusual, and of a taste which I shall leave my readers free to qualify; unusual, and to me inspiring. If I have at all learned the trade of using words to convey truth and to arouse emotion, you have at last furnished me with a subject. For it is in the interest of all mankind, and the

cause of public decency in every quarter of the world, not only that Damien should be righted, but that you and your letter should be displayed at length, in their true colours, to the public eye.

To do this properly, I must begin by quoting you at large: I shall then proceed to criticise your utterance from several points of view, divine and human, in the course of which I shall attempt to draw again, and with more specification, the character of the dead saint whom it has pleased you to vilify: so much being done, I shall say farewell to you for ever.

"Honolulu, *August* 2, 1889.

"Rev. H. B. Gage.

"Dear Brother,—In answer to your inquiries about Father Damien, I can only reply that we who knew the man are surprised at the extravagant newspaper laudations, as if he was a most saintly philanthropist. The simple truth is, he was a coarse, dirty man, headstrong and bigoted. He was not sent to Molokai, but went there without orders; did not stay at the leper settlement (before he became one himself), but circulated freely over the whole island (less than half the island is devoted to the lepers), and he came often to Honolulu. He had no hand in the reforms and improvements inaugurated, which were the work of our Board of Health, as occasion required and means were provided. He was not a pure man in his relations with women, and the leprosy of which he died should be attributed to his vices and carelessness. Others have done much for the lepers, our own ministers, the government physicians, and so forth, but never with the Catholic idea of meriting eternal life.—Yours, etc.,

"C. M. Hyde." [1]

To deal fitly with a letter so extraordinary, I must draw at the outset on my private knowledge of the signatory and his sect. It may offend others; scarcely you, who have been so busy to collect, so bold to publish, gossip on your rivals. And this is perhaps the moment when I may best explain to you the character of what you are to read: I conceive you as a man quite beyond and below the reticences of civility: with what measure you mete, with that shall it be measured you again; with you, at last, I rejoice

[1] From the Sydney *Presbyterian*, October 26, 1889.

to feel the button off the foil and to plunge home. And if in aught that I shall say I should offend others, your colleagues, whom I respect and remember with affection, I can but offer them my regret; I am not free, I am inspired by the consideration of interests far more large; and such pain as can be inflicted by anything from me must be indeed trifling when compared with the pain with which they read your letter. It is not the hangman, but the criminal, that brings dishonour on the house.

You belong, sir, to a sect—I believe my sect, and that in which my ancestors laboured—which has enjoyed, and partly failed to utilise, an exceptional advantage in the islands of Hawaii. The first missionaries came; they found the land already self-purged of its old and bloody faith; they were embraced, almost on their arrival, with enthusiasm; what troubles they supported came far more from whites than from Hawaiians; and to these last they stood (in a rough figure) in the shoes of God. This is not the place to enter into the degree or causes of their failure, such as it is. One element alone is pertinent, and must here be plainly dealt with. In the course of their evangelical calling, they—or too many of them—grew rich. It may be news to you that the houses of missionaries are a cause of mocking on the streets of Honolulu. It will at least be news to you, that when I returned your civil visit, the driver of my cab commented on the size, the taste, and the comfort of your home. It would have been news certainly to myself, had any one told me that afternoon that I should live to drag such matter into print. But you see, sir, how you degrade better men to your own level; and it is needful that those who are to judge betwixt you and me, betwixt Damien and the devil's advocate, should understand your letter to have been penned in a house which could raise, and that very justly, the envy and the comments of the passers-by. I think (to employ a phrase of yours which I admire) it "should be attributed" to you that you have never visited the scene of Damien's life and

death. If you had, and had recalled it, and looked about your pleasant rooms, even your pen perhaps would have been stayed.

Your sect (and remember, as far as any sect avows me, it is mine) has not done ill in a worldly sense in the Hawaiian Kingdom. When calamity befell their innocent parishioners, when leprosy descended and took root in the Eight Islands, a *quid pro quo* was to be looked for. To that prosperous mission, and to you, as one of its adornments, God had sent at last an opportunity. I know I am touching here upon a nerve acutely sensitive. I know that others of your colleagues look back on the inertia of your Church, and the intrusive and decisive heroism of Damien, with something almost to be called remorse. I am sure it is so with yourself; I am persuaded your letter was inspired by a certain envy, not essentially ignoble, and the one human trait to be espied in that performance. You were thinking of the lost chance, the past day; of that which should have been conceived and was not; of the service due and not rendered. *Time was*, said the voice in your ear, in your pleasant room, as you sat raging and writing; and if the words written were base beyond parallel, the rage, I am happy to repeat—it is the only compliment I shall pay you—the rage was almost virtuous. But, sir, when we have failed, and another has succeeded; when we have stood by, and another has stepped in; when we sit and grow bulky in our charming mansions, and a plain, uncouth peasant steps into the battle, under the eyes of God, and succours the afflicted, and consoles the dying, and is himself afflicted in his turn, and dies upon the field of honour—the battle cannot be retrieved as your unhappy irritation has suggested. It is a lost battle, and lost for ever. One thing remained to you in your defeat—some rags of common honour; and these you have made haste to cast away.

Common honour; not the honour of having done anything right, but the honour of not having done aught con-

spicuously foul ; the honour of the inert : that was what remained to you. We are not all expected to be Damiens ; a man may conceive his duty more narrowly, he may love his comforts better ; and none will cast a stone at him for that. But will a gentleman of your reverend profession allow me an example from the fields of gallantry ? When two gentlemen compete for the favour of a lady, and the one succeeds and the other is rejected, and (as will sometimes happen) matter damaging to the successful rival's credit reaches the ear of the defeated, it is held by plain men of no pretensions that his mouth is, in the circumstance, almost necessarily closed. Your Church and Damien's were in Hawaii upon a rivalry to do well : to help, to edify, to set divine examples. You having (in one huge instance) failed, and Damien succeeded, I marvel it should not have occurred to you that you were doomed to silence ; that when you had been outstripped in that high rivalry, and sat inglorious in the midst of your well-being, in your pleasant room—and Damien, crowned with glories and horrors, toiled and rotted in that pigsty of his under the cliffs of Kalawao—you, the elect who would not, were the last man on earth to collect and propagate gossip on the volunteer who would and did.

I think I see you—for I try to see you in the flesh as I write these sentences—I think I see you leap at the word pigsty, a hyperbolical expression at the best. " He had no hand in the reforms," he was " a coarse, dirty man " ; these were your own words ; and you may think it possible that I am come to support you with fresh evidence. In a sense, it is even so. Damien has been too much depicted with a conventional halo and conventional features ; so drawn by men who perhaps had not the eye to remark or the pen to express the individual ; or who perhaps were only blinded and silenced by generous admiration, such as I partly envy for myself—such as you, if your soul were enlightened, would envy on your bended knees. It is the least defect of such a method of portraiture that it makes the

path easy for the devil's advocate, and leaves for the misuse of the slanderer a considerable field of truth. For the truth that is suppressed by friends is the readiest weapon of the enemy. The world, in your despite, may perhaps owe you something, if your letter be the means of substituting once for all a credible likeness for a wax abstraction. For, if that world at all remember you, on the day when Damien of Molokai shall be named Saint, it will be in virtue of one work: your letter to the Reverend H. B. Gage.

You may ask on what authority I speak. It was my inclement destiny to become acquainted, not with Damien, but with Dr. Hyde. When I visited the lazaretto Damien was already in his resting grave. But such information as I have, I gathered on the spot in conversation with those who knew him well and long: some indeed who revered his memory; but others who had sparred and wrangled with him, who beheld him with no halo, who perhaps regarded him with small respect, and through whose unprepared and scarcely partial communications the plain, human features of the man shone on me convincingly. These gave me what knowledge I possess; and I learnt it in that scene where it could be most completely and sensitively understood—Kalawao, which you have never visited, about which you have never so much as endeavoured to inform yourself; for, brief as your letter is, you have found the means to stumble into that confession. "*Less than one-half* of the island," you say, "is devoted to the lepers." Molokai—"*Molokai ahina*," the "grey," lofty, and most desolate island—along all its northern side plunges a front of precipice into a sea of unusual profundity. This range of cliff is, from east to west, the true end and frontier of the island. Only in one spot there projects into the ocean a certain triangular and rugged down, grassy, stony, windy, and rising in the midst into a hill with a dead crater: the whole bearing to the cliff that overhangs it somewhat the same relation as a bracket to a wall. With this hint you will now be able to pick out the leper station on a map;

you will be able to judge how much of Molokai is thus cut off between the surf and precipice, whether less than a half, or less than a quarter, or a fifth, or a tenth—or say, a twentieth; and the next time you burst into print you will be in a position to share with us the issue of your calculations.

I imagine you to be one of those persons who talk with cheerfulness of that place which oxen and wain-ropes could not drag you to behold. You, who do not even know its situation on the map, probably denounce sensational descriptions, stretching your limbs the while in your pleasant parlour on Beretania Street. When I was pulled ashore there one early morning, there sat with me in the boat two sisters, bidding farewell (in humble imitation of Damien) to the lights and joys of human life. One of these wept silently; I could not withhold myself from joining her. Had you been there, it is my belief that nature would have triumphed even in you; and as the boat drew but a little nearer, and you beheld the stairs crowded with abominable deformations of our common manhood, and saw yourself landing in the midst of such a population as only now and then surrounds us in the horror of a nightmare—what a haggard eye you would have rolled over your reluctant shoulder towards the house on Beretania Street! Had you gone on; had you found every fourth face a blot upon the landscape; had you visited the hospital and seen the butt-ends of human beings lying there almost unrecognisable, but still breathing, still thinking, still remembering; you would have understood that life in the lazaretto is an ordeal from which the nerves of a man's spirit shrink, even as his eye quails under the brightness of the sun; you would have felt it was (even to-day) a pitiful place to visit and a hell to dwell in. It is not the fear of possible infection. That seems a little thing when compared with the pain, the pity, and the disgust of the visitor's surroundings, and the atmosphere of affliction, disease, and physical disgrace in which he breathes. I do not think I am a man more than

usually timid; but I never recall the days and nights I spent upon that island promontory (eight days and seven nights), without heartfelt thankfulness that I am somewhere else. I find in my diary that I speak of my stay as a "grinding experience": I have once jotted in the margin, "*Harrowing* is the word"; and when the *Mokolii* bore me at last towards the outer world, I kept repeating to myself, with a new conception of their pregnancy, those simple words of the song—

"'Tis the most distressful country that ever yet was seen."

And observe: that which I saw and suffered from was a settlement purged, bettered, beautified; the new village built, the hospital and the Bishop-Home excellently arranged; the sisters, the doctor, and the missionaries, all indefatigable in their noble tasks. It was a different place when Damien came there, and made his great renunciation, and slept that first night under a tree amidst his rotting brethren: alone with pestilence; and looking forward (with what courage, with what pitiful sinkings of dread, God only knows) to a lifetime of dressing sores and stumps.

You will say, perhaps, I am too sensitive, that sights as painful abound in cancer hospitals and are confronted daily by doctors and nurses. I have long learned to admire and envy the doctors and the nurses. But there is no cancer hospital so large and populous as Kalawao and Kalaupapa; and in such a matter every fresh case, like every inch of length in the pipe of an organ, deepens the note of the impression; for what daunts the onlooker is that monstrous sum of human suffering by which he stands surrounded. Lastly, no doctor or nurse is called upon to enter once for all the doors of that gehenna; they do not say farewell, they need not abandon hope, on its sad threshold; they but go for a time to their high calling, and can look forward as they go to relief, to recreation, and to rest. But Damien shut-to with his own hand the doors of his own sepulchre.

I shall now extract three passages from my diary at Kalawao.

A. "Damien is dead and already somewhat ungratefully remembered in the field of his labours and sufferings. 'He was a good man, but very officious,' says one. Another tells me he had fallen (as other priests so easily do) into something of the ways and habits of thought of a Kanaka; but he had the wit to recognise the fact, and the good sense to laugh at" [over] "it. A plain man it seems he was; I cannot find he was a popular."

B. "After Ragsdale's death" [Ragsdale was a famous Luna, or overseer, of the unruly settlement] "there followed a brief term of office by Father Damien which served only to publish the weakness of that noble man. He was rough in his ways, and he had no control. Authority was relaxed; Damien's life was threatened, and he was soon eager to resign."

C. "Of Damien I begin to have an idea. He seems to have been a man of the peasant class, certainly of the peasant type: shrewd; ignorant and bigoted, yet with an open mind, and capable of receiving and digesting a reproof if it were bluntly administered; superbly generous in the least thing as well as in the greatest, and as ready to give his last shirt (although not without human grumbling) as he had been to sacrifice his life; essentially indiscreet and officious, which made him a troublesome colleague; domineering in all his ways, which made him incurably unpopular with the Kanakas, but yet destitute of real authority, so that his boys laughed at him and he must carry out his wishes by the means of bribes. He learned to have a mania for doctoring; and set up the Kanakas against the remedies of his regular rivals: perhaps (if anything matter at all in the treatment of such a disease) the worst thing that he did, and certainly the easiest. The best and worst of the man appear very plainly in his dealings with Mr. Chapman's money; he had originally laid it out" [intended to lay it out] "entirely for the benefit of Catholics, and

even so not wisely ; but after a long, plain talk, he admitted his error fully and revised the list. The sad state of the boys' home is in part the result of his lack of control ; in part, of his own slovenly ways and false ideas of hygiene. Brother officials used to call it ' Damien's Chinatown.' ' Well,' they would say, ' your Chinatown keeps growing.' And he would laugh with perfect good-nature, and adhere to his errors with perfect obstinacy. So much I have gathered of truth about this plain, noble human brother and father of ours ; his imperfections are the traits of his face, by which we know him for our fellow ; his martyrdom and his example nothing can lessen or annul ; and only a person here on the spot can properly appreciate their greatness."

I have set down these private passages, as you perceive, without correction ; thanks to you, the public has them in their bluntness. They are almost a list of the man's faults, for it is rather these that I was seeking : with his virtues, with the heroic profile of his life, I and the world were already sufficiently acquainted. I was besides a little suspicious of Catholic testimony ; in no ill sense, but merely because Damien's admirers and disciples were the least likely to be critical. I know you will be more suspicious still ; and the facts set down above were one and all collected from the lips of Protestants who had opposed the father in his life. Yet I am strangely deceived, or they build up the image of a man, with all his weaknesses, essentially heroic, and alive with rugged honesty, generosity, and mirth.

Take it for what it is, rough private jottings of the worst sides of Damien's character, collected from the lips of those who had laboured with and (in your own phrase) " knew the man " ;—though I question whether Damien would have said that he knew you. Take it, and observe with wonder how well you were served by your gossips, how ill by your intelligence and sympathy ; in how many points of fact we are at one, and how widely our appreciations

vary. There is something wrong here; either with you or me. It is possible, for instance, that you, who seem to have so many ears in Kalawao, had heard of the affair of Mr. Chapman's money, and were singly struck by Damien's intended wrong-doing. I was struck with that also, and set it fairly down; but I was struck much more by the fact that he had the honesty of mind to be convinced. I may here tell you that it was a long business; that one of his colleagues sat with him late into the night, multiplying arguments and accusations; that the father listened as usual with "perfect good-nature and perfect obstinacy"; but at the last, when he was persuaded—"Yes," said he, "I am very much obliged to you; you have done me a service; it would have been a theft." There are many (not Catholics merely) who require their heroes and saints to be infallible; to these the story will be painful; not to the true lovers, patrons, and servants of mankind.

And I take it, this is a type of our division; that you are one of those who have an eye for faults and failures; that you take a pleasure to find and publish them; and that, having found them, you make haste to forget the overvailing virtues and the real success which had alone introduced them to your knowledge. It is a dangerous frame of mind. That you may understand how dangerous, and into what a situation it has already brought you, we will (if you please) go hand-in-hand through the different phrases of your letter, and candidly examine each from the point of view of its truth, its appositeness, and its charity.

Damien was *coarse.*

It is very possible. You make us sorry for the lepers who had only a coarse old peasant for their friend and father. But you, who were so refined, why were you not there, to cheer them with the lights of culture? Or may I remind you that we have some reason to doubt if John the Baptist were genteel; and in the case of Peter, on whose career you doubtless dwell approvingly in the pulpit, no

doubt at all he was a "coarse, headstrong" fisherman! Yet even in our Protestant Bibles Peter is called Saint.

Damien was *dirty.*

He was. Think of the poor lepers annoyed with this dirty comrade! But the clean Dr. Hyde was at his food in a fine house.

Damien was *headstrong.*

I believe you are right again; and I thank God for his strong head and heart.

Damien was *bigoted.*

I am not fond of bigots myself, because they are not fond of me. But what is meant by bigotry, that we should regard it as a blemish in a priest? Damien believed his own religion with the simplicity of a peasant or a child; as I would I could suppose that you do. For this, I wonder at him some way off; and had that been his only character, should have avoided him in life. But the point of interest in Damien, which has caused him to be so much talked about and made him at last the subject of your pen and mine, was that, in him, his bigotry, his intense and narrow faith, wrought potently for good, and strengthened him to be one of the world's heroes and exemplars.

Damien *was not sent to Molokai, but went there without orders.*

Is this a misreading? or do you really mean the words for blame? I have heard Christ, in the pulpits of our Church, held up for imitation on the ground that His sacrifice was voluntary. Does Dr. Hyde think otherwise?

Damien *did not stay at the settlement, etc.*

It is true he was allowed many indulgences. Am I to understand that you blame the father for profiting by these, or the officers for granting them? In either case, it is a

mighty Spartan standard to issue from the house on Beretania Street; and I am convinced you will find yourself with few supporters.

Damien *had no hand in the reforms, etc.*

I think even you will admit that I have already been frank in my description of the man I am defending; but before I take you up upon this head, I will be franker still, and tell you that perhaps nowhere in the world can a man taste a more pleasurable sense of contrast than when he passes from Damien's "Chinatown" at Kalawao to the beautiful Bishop-Home at Kalaupapa. At this point, in my desire to make all fair for you, I will break my rule and adduce Catholic testimony. Here is a passage from my diary about my visit to the Chinatown, from which you will see how it is (even now) regarded by its own officials: "We went round all the dormitories, refectories, etc.—dark and dingy enough, with a superficial cleanliness, which he" [Mr. Dutton, the lay brother] "did not seek to defend. 'It is almost decent,' said he; 'the sisters will make that all right when we get them here.'" And yet I gathered it was already better since Damien was dead, and far better than when he was there alone and had his own (not always excellent) way. I have now come far enough to meet you on a common ground of fact; and I tell you that, to a mind not prejudiced by jealousy, all the reforms of the lazaretto, and even those which he most vigorously opposed, are properly the work of Damien. They are the evidence of his success; they are what his heroism provoked from the reluctant and the careless. Many were before him in the field; Mr. Meyer, for instance, of whose faithful work we hear too little: there have been many since; and some had more worldly wisdom, though none had more devotion, than our saint. Before his day, even you will confess, they had effected little. It was his part, by one striking act of martyrdom, to direct all men's eyes on that distressful country. At a blow, and with the price of his life, he made

the place illustrious and public. And that, if you will consider largely, was the one reform needful; pregnant of all that should succeed. It brought money; it brought (best individual addition of them all) the sisters; it brought supervision, for public opinion and public interest landed with the man at Kalawao. If ever any man brought reforms, and died to bring them, it was he. There is not a clean cup or towel in the Bishop-Home, but dirty Damien washed it.

Damien *was not a pure man in his relations with women, etc.*

How do you know that? Is this the nature of the conversation in that house on Beretania Street which the cabman envied, driving past?—racy details of the misconduct of the poor peasant priest, toiling under the cliffs of Molokai?

Many have visited the station before me; they seem not to have heard the rumour. When I was there I heard many shocking tales, for my informants were men speaking with the plainness of the laity; and I heard plenty of complaints of Damien. Why was this never mentioned? and how came it to you in the retirement of your clerical parlour?

But I must not even seem to deceive you. This scandal, when I read it in your letter, was not new to me. I had heard it once before; and I must tell you how. There came to Samoa a man from Honolulu; he in a public-house on the beach volunteered the statement that Damien had "contracted the disease from having connection with the female lepers"; and I find a joy in telling you how the report was welcomed in a public-house. A man sprang to his feet; I am not at liberty to give his name, but from what I heard I doubt if you would care to have him to dinner in Beretania Street. "You miserable little ——" (here is a word I dare not print, it would so shock your ears). "You miserable little ——," he cried, "if the story were a thousand times true, can't you see you

are a million times a lower —— for daring to repeat it ?" I wish it could be told of you that when the report reached you in your house, perhaps after family worship, you had found in your soul enough holy anger to receive it with the same expressions ; ay, even with that one which I dare not print ; it would not need to have been blotted away, like Uncle Toby's oath, by the tears of the recording angel ; it would have been counted to you for your brightest righteousness. But you have deliberately chosen the part of the man from Honolulu, and you have played it with improvements of your own. The man from Honolulu—miserable, leering creature—communicated the tale to a rude knot of beach-combing drinkers in a public-house, where (I will so far agree with your temperance opinions) man is not always at his noblest ; and the man from Honolulu had himself been drinking—drinking, we may charitably fancy, to excess. It was to your "Dear Brother, the Reverend H. B. Gage," that you chose to communicate the sickening story ; and the blue ribbon which adorns your portly bosom forbids me to allow you the extenuating plea that you were drunk when it was done. Your "dear brother"—a brother indeed—made haste to deliver up your letter (as a means of grace, perhaps) to the religious papers ; where, after many months, I found and read and wondered at it ; and whence I have now reproduced it for the wonder of others. And you and your dear brother have, by this cycle of operations, built up a contrast very edifying to examine in detail. The man whom you would not care to have to dinner, on the one side ; on the other, the Reverend Dr. Hyde and the Reverend H. B. Gage : the Apia bar-room, the Honolulu manse.

But I fear you scarce appreciate how you appear to your fellow-men ; and to bring it home to you, I will suppose your story to be true. I will suppose—and God forgive me for supposing it—that Damien faltered and stumbled in his narrow path of duty ; I will suppose that, in the horror of his isolation, perhaps in the fever of incipient disease, he,

who was doing so much more than he had sworn, failed in the letter of his priestly oath—he, who was so much a better man than either you or me, who did what we have never dreamed of daring—he too tasted of our common frailty. "O, Iago, the pity of it!" The least tender should be moved to tears; the most incredulous to prayer. And all that you could do was to pen your letter to the Reverend H. B. Gage!

Is it growing at all clear to you what a picture you have drawn of your own heart? I will try yet once again to make it clearer. You had a father: suppose this tale were about him, and some informant brought it to you, proof in hand: I am not making too high an estimate of your emotional nature when I suppose you would regret the circumstance? that you would feel the tale of frailty the more keenly since it shamed the author of your days? and that the last thing you would do would be to publish it in the religious press? Well, the man who tried to do what Damien did is my father, and the father of the man in the Apia bar, and the father of all who love goodness; and he was your father too, if God had given you grace to see it.

XI

MY FIRST BOOK—"TREASURE ISLAND"

It was far indeed from being my first book, for I am not a novelist alone. But I am well aware that my paymaster, the Great Public, regards what else I have written with indifference, if not aversion; if it call upon me at all, it calls on me in the familiar and indelible character; and when I am asked to talk of my first book, no question in the world but what is meant is my first novel.

Sooner or later, somehow, anyhow, I was bound to write a novel. It seems vain to ask why. Men are born with various manias: from my earliest childhood it was mine to make a plaything of imaginary series of events; and as soon as I was able to write, I became a good friend to the papermakers. Reams upon reams must have gone to the making of "Rathillet," "The Pentland Rising,"[1] "The King's Pardon" (otherwise "Park Whitehead"), "Edward Daven," "A Country Dance," and "A Vendetta in the West"; and it is consolatory to remember that these reams are now all ashes, and have been received again into the soil. I have named but a few of my ill-fated efforts, only such indeed as came to a fair bulk ere they were desisted from; and even so they cover a long vista of years. "Rathillet" was attempted before fifteen, "The Vendetta" at twenty-nine, and the succession of defeats

[1] *Ne pas confondre.* Not the slim green pamphlet with the imprint of Andrew Elliot, for which (as I see with amazement from the book-lists) the gentlemen of England are willing to pay fancy prices; but its predecessor, a bulky historical romance without a spark of merit and now deleted from the world.—[R. L. S.]

lasted unbroken till I was thirty-one. By that time I had written little books and little essays and short stories ; and had got patted on the back and paid for them—though not enough to live upon. I had quite a reputation, I was the successful man ; I passed my days in toil, the futility of which would sometimes make my cheek to burn—that I should spend a man's energy upon this business, and yet could not earn a livelihood : and still there shone ahead of me an unattained ideal : although I had attempted the thing with vigour not less than ten or twelve times, I had not yet written a novel. All—all my pretty ones—had gone for a little, and then stopped inexorably like a schoolboy's watch. I might be compared to a cricketer of many years' standing who should never have made a run. Anybody can write a short story—a bad one, I mean—who has industry and paper and time enough ; but not every one may hope to write even a bad novel. It is the length that kills. The accepted novelist may take his novel up and put it down, spend days upon it in vain, and write not any more than he makes haste to blot. Not so the beginner. Human nature has certain rights ; instinct—the instinct of self-preservation—forbids that any man (cheered and supported by the consciousness of no previous victory) should endure the miseries of unsuccessful literary toil beyond a period to be measured in weeks. There must be something for hope to feed upon. The beginner must have a slant of wind, a lucky vein must be running, he must be in one of those hours when the words come and the phrases balance of themselves—*even to begin.* And having begun, what a dread looking forward is that until the book shall be accomplished ! For so long a time the slant is to continue unchanged, the vein to keep running, for so long a time you must keep at command the same quality of style : for so long a time your puppets are to be always vital, always consistent, always vigorous ! I remember I used to look, in those days, upon every three-volume novel with a sort of veneration, as a feat—not,

possibly, of literature—but at least of physical and moral endurance and the courage of Ajax.

In the fated year I came to live with my father and mother at Kinnaird, above Pitlochry. Then I walked on the red moors and by the side of the golden burn ; the rude, pure air of our mountains inspirited, if it did not inspire, us, and my wife and I projected a joint volume of bogey stories, for which she wrote " The Shadow on the Bed," and I turned out " Thrawn Janet " and a first draft of " The Merry Men." I love my native air, but it does not love me ; and the end of this delightful period was a cold, a fly-blister and a migration by Strathardle and Glenshee to the Castleton of Braemar. There it blew a good deal and rained in a proportion ; my native air was more unkind than man's ingratitude, and I must consent to pass a good deal of my time between four walls in a house lugubriously known as the Late Miss M'Gregor's Cottage. And now admire the finger of predestination. There was a schoolboy in the Late Miss M'Gregor's Cottage, home from the holidays, and much in want of " something craggy to break his mind upon." He had no thought of literature ; it was the art of Raphael that received his fleeting suffrages ; and with the aid of pen and ink and a shilling box of water-colours, he had soon turned one of the rooms into a picture-gallery. My more immediate duty towards the gallery was to be showman ; but I would sometimes unbend a little, join the artist (so to speak) at the easel, and pass the afternoon with him in a generous emulation, making coloured drawings. On one of these occasions, I made the map of an island ; it was elaborately and (I thought) beautifully coloured ; the shape of it took my fancy beyond expression ; it contained harbours that pleased me like sonnets ; and, with the unconsciousness of the predestined, I ticketed my performance " Treasure Island." I am told there are people who do not care for maps, and find it hard to believe. The names, the shapes of the woodlands, the courses of the roads and rivers, the prehistoric footsteps of

man still distinctly traceable up hill and down dale, the mills and the ruins, the ponds and the ferries, perhaps the *Standing Stone* or the *Druidic Circle* on the heath ; here is an inexhaustible fund of interest for any man with eyes to see or twopence-worth of imagination to understand with ! No child but must remember laying his head in the grass, staring into the infinitesimal forest and seeing it grow populous with fairy armies. Somewhat in this way, as I paused upon my map of " Treasure Island," the future character of the book began to appear there visibly among imaginary woods ; and their brown faces and bright weapons peeped out upon me from unexpected quarters, as they passed to and fro, fighting and hunting treasure, on these few square inches of a flat projection. The next thing I knew I had some papers before me and was writing out a list of chapters. How often have I done so, and the thing gone on further ! But there seemed elements of success about this enterprise. It was to be a story for boys : no need of psychology or fine writing ; and I had a boy at hand to be a touchstone. Women were excluded. I was unable to handle a brig (which the *Hispaniola* should have been), but I thought I could make shift to sail her as a schooner without public shame. And then I had an idea for John Silver from which I promised myself funds of entertainment : to take an admired friend of mine (whom the reader very likely knows and admires as much as I do), to deprive him of all his finer qualities and higher graces of temperament, to leave him with nothing but his strength, his courage, his quickness, and his magnificent geniality, and to try to express these in terms of the culture of a raw tarpaulin. Such psychical surgery is, I think, a common way of " making character " ; perhaps it is, indeed, the only way. We can put in the quaint figure that spoke a hundred words with us yesterday by the wayside ; but do we know him ? Our friend with his infinite variety and flexibility, we know—but can we put him in ? Upon the first, we must engraft secondary and imaginary qualities,

possibly all wrong; from the second, knife in hand, we must cut away and deduct the needless arborescence of his nature, but the trunk and the few branches that remain we may at least be fairly sure of.

On a chill September morning, by the cheek of a brisk fire, and the rain drumming on the window, I began "The Sea Cook," for that was the original title. I have begun (and finished) a number of other books, but I cannot remember to have sat down to one of them with more complacency. It is not to be wondered at, for stolen waters are proverbially sweet. I am now upon a painful chapter. No doubt the parrot once belonged to Robinson Crusoe. No doubt the skeleton is conveyed from Poe. I think little of these, they are trifles and details; and no man can hope to have a monopoly of skeletons or make a corner in talking birds. The stockade, I am told, is from "Masterman Ready." It may be, I care not a jot. These useful writers had fulfilled the poet's saying: departing, they had left behind them Footprints on the sands of time, Footprints which perhaps another—and I was the other! It is my debt to Washington Irving that exercises my conscience, and justly so, for I believe plagiarism was rarely carried further. I chanced to pick up the "Tales of a Traveller" some years ago with a view to an anthology of prose narrative, and the book flew up and struck me: Billy Bones, his chest, the company in the parlour, the whole inner spirit, and a good deal of the material detail of my first chapters—all were there, all were the property of Washington Irving. But I had no guess of it then as I sat writing by the fireside, in what seemed the spring-tides of a somewhat pedestrian inspiration; nor yet day by day, after lunch, as I read aloud my morning's work to the family. It seemed to me original as sin; it seemed to belong to me like my right eye. I had counted on one boy, I found I had two in my audience. My father caught fire at once with all the romance and childishness of his original nature. His own stories, that every night of his life he

put himself to sleep with, dealt perpetually with ships, roadside inns, robbers, old sailors, and commercial travellers before the era of steam. He never finished one of these romances; the lucky man did not require to finish them! But in "Treasure Island" he recognised something kindred to his own imagination; it was *his* kind of picturesque; and he not only heard with delight the daily chapter, but set himself acting to collaborate. When the time came for Billy Bones's chest to be ransacked, he must have passed the better part of a day preparing, on the back of a legal envelope, an inventory of its contents, which I exactly followed; and the name of "Flint's old ship"—the *Walrus*—was given at his particular request. And now who should come dropping in, *ex machinâ*, but Dr. Japp, like the disguised prince who is to bring down the curtain upon peace and happiness in the last act; for he carried in his pocket, not a horn or a talisman, but a publisher. Even the ruthlessness of a united family recoiled before the extreme measure of inflicting on our guest the mutilated members of "The Sea Cook"; at the same time, we would by no means stop our readings; and accordingly the tale was begun again at the beginning, and solemnly re-delivered for the benefit of Dr. Japp. From that moment on, I have thought highly of his critical faculty; for when he left us he carried away the manuscript in his portmanteau to submit to his friend (since then my own) Mr. Henderson, who accepted it for his periodical, *Young Folks*.

Here, then, was everything to keep me up, sympathy, help, and now a positive engagement. I had chosen besides a very easy style. Compare it with the almost contemporary "Merry Men"; one reader may prefer the one style, one the other—'tis an affair of character, perhaps of mood; but no expert can fail to see that the one is much more difficult, and the other much easier to maintain. It seems as though a full-grown experienced man of letters might engage to turn out "Treasure Island" at so many pages a day, and keep his pipe alight. But alas! this was

not my case. Fifteen days I stuck to it, and turned out fifteen chapters; and then, in the early paragraphs of the sixteenth, ignominiously lost hold. My mouth was empty; there was not one word of "Treasure Island" in my bosom; and here were the proofs of the beginning already waiting me at the "Hand and Spear"! Then I corrected them, living for the most part alone, walking on the heath at Weybridge in dewy autumn mornings, a good deal pleased with what I had done, and more appalled than I can depict to you in words at what remained for me to do. I was thirty-one; I was the head of a family; I had lost my health; I had never yet paid my way, never yet made £200 a year; my father had quite recently bought back and cancelled a book that was judged a failure: was this to be another and last fiasco? I was indeed very close on despair; but I shut my mouth hard, and during the journey to Davos, where I was to pass the winter, had the resolution to think of other things and bury myself in the novels of M. du Boisgobey. Arrived at my destination, down I sat one morning to the unfinished tale; and behold! it flowed from me like small-talk; and in a second tide of delighted industry, and again at the rate of a chapter a day, I finished "Treasure Island." It had to be transcribed almost exactly; my wife was ill; the schoolboy remained alone of the faithful; and John Addington Symonds (to whom I timidly mentioned what I was engaged on) looked on me askance. He was at that time very eager I should write on the characters of Theophrastus: so far out may be the judgments of the wisest men. But Symonds (to be sure) was scarce the confidant to go to for sympathy on a boy's story. He was large-minded; "a full man," if there was one; but the very name of my enterprise would suggest to him only capitulations of sincerity and solecisms of style. Well! he was not far wrong.

"Treasure Island"—it was Mr. Henderson who deleted the first title, "The Sea Cook"—appeared duly in the story paper, where it figured in the ignoble midst, without wood-

cuts, and attracted not the least attention. I did not care. I liked the tale myself, for much the same reason as my father liked the beginning; it was my kind of picturesque. I was not a little proud of John Silver, also; and to this day rather admire that smooth and formidable adventurer. What was infinitely more exhilarating, I had passed a landmark; I had finished a tale, and written "The End" upon my manuscript, as I had not done since "The Pentland Rising," when I was a boy of sixteen not yet at college. In truth it was so by a set of lucky accidents; had not Dr. Japp come on his visit, had not the tale flowed from me with singular ease, it must have been laid aside like its predecessors, and found a circuitous and unlamented way to the fire. Purists may suggest it would have been better so. I am not of that mind. The tale seems to have given much pleasure, and it brought (or was the means of bringing) fire and food and wine to a deserving family in which I took an interest. I need scarcely say I mean my own.

But the adventures of "Treasure Island" are not yet quite at an end. I had written it up to the map. The map was the chief part of my plot. For instance, I had called an islet "Skeleton Island," not knowing what I meant, seeking only for the immediate picturesque, and it was to justify this name that I broke into the gallery of Mr. Poe and stole Flint's pointer. And in the same way, it was because I had made two harbours that the *Hispaniola* was sent on her wanderings with Israel Hands. The time came when it was decided to republish, and I sent in my manuscript, and the map along with it, to Messrs. Cassell. The proofs came, they were corrected, but I heard nothing of the map. I wrote and asked; was told it had never been received, and sat aghast. It is one thing to draw a map at random, set a scale in one corner of it at a venture, and write up a story to the measurements. It is quite another to have to examine a whole book, make an inventory of all the allusions contained in it, and with a pair of compasses, painfully design a map to suit the data. I did it; and the

map was drawn again in my father's office, with embellishments of blowing whales and sailing ships, and my father himself brought into service a knack he had of various writing, and elaborately *forged* the signature of Captain Flint, and the sailing directions of Billy Bones. But somehow it was never *Treasure Island* to me.

I have said the map was the most of the plot. I might almost say it was the whole. A few reminiscences of Poe, Defoe, and Washington Irving, a copy of Johnson's "Buccaneers," the name of the Dead Man's Chest from Kingsley's "At Last," some recollections of canoeing on the high seas, and the map itself, with its infinite, eloquent suggestion, made up the whole of my materials. It is, perhaps, not often that a map figures so largely in a tale, yet it is always important. The author must know his countryside, whether real or imaginary, like his hand; the distances, the points of the compass, the place of the sun's rising, the behaviour of the moon, should all be beyond cavil. And how troublesome the moon is! I have come to grief over the moon in "Prince Otto," and, so soon as that was pointed out to me, adopted a precaution which I recommend to other men—I never write now without an almanac. With an almanac and the map of the country, and the plan of every house, either actually plotted on paper or already and immediately apprehended in the mind, a man may hope to avoid some of the grossest possible blunders. With the map before him, he will scarce allow the sun to set in the east, as it does in "The Antiquary." With the almanac at hand, he will scarce allow two horsemen, journeying on the most urgent affair, to employ six days, from three of the Monday morning till late in the Saturday night, upon a journey of, say, ninety or a hundred miles, and before the week is out, and still on the same nags, to cover fifty in one day, as may be read at length in the inimitable novel of "Rob Roy." And it is certainly well, though far from necessary, to avoid such "croppers." But it is my contention—my superstition, if you like—that

who is faithful to his map, and consults it, and draws from it his inspiration, daily and hourly, gains positive support, and not mere negative immunity from accident. The tale has a root there; it grows in that soil; it has a spine of its own behind the words. Better if the country be real, and he has walked every foot of it and knows every milestone. But even with imaginary places, he will do well in the beginning to provide a map; as he studies it, relations will appear that he had not thought upon; he will discover obvious, though unsuspected, shortcuts and footprints for his messengers; and even when a map is not all the plot, as it was in "Treasure Island," it will be found to be a mine of suggestion.

XII

THE GENESIS OF "THE MASTER OF BALLANTRAE"

I was walking one night in the verandah of a small house in which I lived, outside the hamlet of Saranac. It was winter; the night was very dark; the air extraordinary clear and cold, and sweet with the purity of forests. From a good way below, the river was to be heard contending with ice and boulders: a few lights appeared, scattered unevenly among the darkness, but so far away as not to lessen the sense of isolation. For the making of a story here were fine conditions. I was besides moved with the spirit of emulation, for I had just finished my third or fourth perusal of "The Phantom Ship." "Come," said I to my engine, "let us make a tale, a story of many years and countries, of the sea and the land, savagery, and civilisation; a story that shall have the same large features, and may be treated in the same summary elliptic method as the book you have been reading and admiring." I was here brought up with a reflection exceedingly just in itself, but which, as the sequel shows, I failed to profit by. I saw that Marryat, not less than Homer, Milton, and Virgil, profited by the choice of a familiar and legendary subject; so that he prepared his readers on the very title-page; and this set me cudgelling my brains, if by any chance I could hit upon some similar belief to be the centre-piece of my own meditated fiction. In the course of this vain search there cropped up in my memory a singular case of a buried and resuscitated fakir, which I had been often told by an

uncle of mine, then lately dead, Inspector-General John Balfour.

On such a fine frosty night, with no wind and the thermometer below zero, the brain works with much vivacity ; and the next moment I had seen the circumstance transplanted from India and the tropics to the Adirondack wilderness and the stringent cold of the Canadian border. Here then, almost before I had begun my story, I had two countries, two of the ends of the earth involved : and thus though the notion of the resuscitated man failed entirely on the score of general acceptation, or even (as I have since found) acceptability, it fitted at once with my design of a tale of many lands ; and this decided me to consider further of its possibilities. The man who should thus be buried was the first question : a good man, whose return to life would be hailed by the reader and the other characters with gladness ? This trenched upon the Christian picture and was dismissed. If the idea, then, was to be of any use at all for me, I had to create a kind of evil genius to his friends and family, take him through many disappearances, and make this final restoration from the pit of death, in the icy American wilderness, the last and the grimmest of the series. I need not tell my brothers of the craft that I was now in the most interesting moment of an author's life ; the hours that followed that night upon the balcony, and the following nights and days, whether walking abroad or lying wakeful in my bed, were hours of unadulterated joy. My mother, who was then living with me alone, perhaps had less enjoyment ; for, in the absence of my wife, who is my usual helper in these times of parturition, I must spur her up at all seasons to hear me relate and try to clarify my unformed fancies.

And while I was groping for the fable and the character required, behold I found them lying ready and nine years old in my memory. Pease porridge hot, pease porridge cold, pease porridge in the pot, nine years old. Was there ever a more complete justification of the rule of Horace ?

Here, thinking of quite other things, I had stumbled on the solution or perhaps I should rather say (in stagewright phrase) the Curtain or final Tableau of a story conceived long before on the moors between Pitlochry and Strathardle, conceived in Highland rain, in the blend of the smell of heather and bog-plants, and with a mind full of the Athole correspondence and the memories of the dumlicide Justice. So long ago, so far away it was, that I had first evoked the faces and the mutual tragic situation of the men of Durrisdeer.

My story was now world-wide enough : Scotland, India, and America being all obligatory scenes. But of these India was strange to me except in books ; I had never known any living Indian save a Parsee, a member of my club in London, equally civilised, and (to all seeing) equally Occidental with myself. If was plain, thus far, that I should have to get into India and out of it again upon a foot of fairy lightness ; and I believe this first suggested to me the idea of the Chevalier Burke for a narrator. It was at first intended that he should be Scottish, and I was then filled with fears that he might prove only the degraded shadow of my own Alan Breck. Presently, however, it began to occur to me it would be like my Master to curry favour with the Prince's Irishmen ; and that an Irish refugee would have a particular reason to find himself in India with his countryman, the unfortunate Lally. Irish, therefore, I decided he should be, and then, all of a sudden, I was aware of a tall shadow across my path, the shadow of Barry Lyndon. No man (in Lord Foppington's phrase) of a nice morality could go very deep with my Master : in the original idea of this story conceived in Scotland, this companion had been besides intended to be worse than the bad elder son with whom (as it was then meant) he was to visit Scotland ; if I took an Irishman, and a very bad Irishman, in the midst of the eighteenth century, how was I to evade Barry Lyndon ? The wretch besieged me, offering his services ; he gave me excellent references ; he

proved that he was highly fitted for the work I had to do; he, or my own evil heart, suggested it was easy to disguise his ancient livery with a little lace and a few frogs and buttons, so that Thackeray himself should hardly recognise him. And then of a sudden there came to me memories of a young Irishman, with whom I was once intimate, and had spent long nights walking and talking with, upon a very desolate coast in a bleak autumn: I recalled him as a youth of an extraordinary moral simplicity—almost vacancy; plastic to any influence, the creature of his admirations: and putting such a youth in fancy into the career of a soldier of fortune, it occurred to me that he would serve my turn as well as Mr. Lyndon, and, in place of entering into competition with the Master, would afford a slight though a distinct relief. I know not if I have done him well, though his moral dissertations always highly entertained me: but I own I have been surprised to find that he reminded some critics of Barry Lyndon after all. . . .

XIII

RANDOM MEMORIES: *ROSA QUO LOCORUM*

I

THROUGH what little channels, by what hints and premonitions, the consciousness of the man's art dawns first upon the child, it should be not only interesting but instructive to inquire. A matter of curiosity to-day, it will become the ground of science to-morrow. From the mind of childhood there is more history and more philosophy to be fished up than from all the printed volumes in a library. The child is conscious of an interest, not in literature but in life. A taste for the precise, the adroit or the comely in the use of words, comes late; but long before that he has enjoyed in books a delightful dress rehearsal of experience. He is first conscious of this material—I had almost said this practical—pre-occupation; it does not follow that it really came the first. I have some old fogged negatives in my collection that would seem to imply a prior stage. "The Lord is gone up with a shout, and God with the sound of a trumpet"—memorial version, I know not where to find the text—rings still in my ear from my first childhood, and perhaps with something of my nurse's accent. There was possibly some sort of image written in my mind by these loud words, but I believe the words themselves were what I cherished. I had about the same time, and under the same influence—that of my dear nurse—a favourite author: it is possible the reader has not heard of him—the Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne.

My nurse and I admired his name exceedingly, so that I must have been taught the love of beautiful sounds before I was breeched; and I remember two specimens of his muse until this day:—

> "Behind the hills of Naphtali
> The sun went slowly down,
> Leaving on mountain, tower, and tree,
> A tinge of golden brown."

There is imagery here, and I set it on one side. The other —it is but a verse—not only contains no image, but is quite unintelligible even to my comparatively instructed mind, and I know not even how to spell the outlandish vocable that charmed me in my childhood:

> "Jehovah Tschidkenu is nothing to her";[1]

I may say, without flippancy, that he was nothing to me either, since I had no ray of a guess of what he was about; yet the verse, from then to now, a longer interval than the life of a generation, has continued to haunt me.

I have said that I should set a passage distinguished by obvious and pleasing imagery, however faint; for the child thinks much in images, words are very live to him, phrases that imply a picture eloquent beyond their value. Rummaging in the dusty pigeon-holes of memory, I came once upon a graphic version of the famous Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd": and from the places employed in its illustration, which are all in the immediate neighbourhood of a house then occupied by my father, I am able to date it before the seventh year of my age, although it was probably earlier in fact. The "pastures green" were represented by a certain suburban stubble-field, where I had once walked with my nurse, under an autumnal sunset, on the banks of the Water of Leith: the place is long ago built up; no pastures now, no stubble-fields; only a maze of little streets and smoking chimneys and shrill children.

[1] "Jehovah Tsidkenu," translated in the Authorised Version as "The Lord our Righteousness" (Jeremiah xxiii. 6 and xxxiii. 16).

Here, in the fleecy person of a sheep, I seemed to myself to follow something unseen, unrealised, and yet benignant; and close by the sheep in which I was incarnated—as if for greater security—rustled the skirts of my nurse. "Death's dark vale" was a certain archway in the Warriston Cemetery: a formidable yet beloved spot, for children love to be afraid,—in measure as they love all experience of vitality. Here I beheld myself some paces ahead (seeing myself, I mean, from behind) utterly alone in that uncanny passage: on the one side of me a rude, knobby shepherd's staff, such as cheers the heart of the cockney tourist, on the other a rod like a billiard cue, appeared to accompany my progress: the staff sturdily upright, the billiard cue inclined confidentially, like one whispering, towards my ear. I was aware—I will never tell you how—that the presence of these articles afforded me encouragement. The third and last of my pictures illustrated the words:—

> "My table Thou hast furnishèd
> In presence of my foes:
> My head Thou dost with oil anoint,
> And my cup overflows":

and this was perhaps the most interesting of the series. I saw myself seated in a kind of open stone summer-house at table; over my shoulder a hairy, bearded, and robed presence anointed me from an authentic shoe-horn; the summer-house was part of the green court of a ruin, and from the far side of the court black and white imps discharged against me ineffectual arrows. The picture appears arbitrary, but I can trace every detail to its source, as Mr. Brock analysed the dream of Alan Armadale. The summer-house and court were muddled together out of Billings' "Antiquities of Scotland"; the imps conveyed from Bagster's "Pilgrim's Progress"; the bearded and robed figure from any one of a thousand Bible pictures; and the shoe-horn was plagiarised from an old illustrated Bible, where it figured in the hand of Samuel anointing Saul, and

had been pointed out to me as a jest by my father. It was shown me for a jest, remark; but the serious spirit of infancy adopted it in earnest. Children are all classics; a bottle would have seemed an intermediary too trivial—that divine refreshment of whose meaning I had no guess; and I seized on the idea of that mystic shoe-horn with delight, even as, a little later, I should have written flagon, chalice, hanaper, beaker, or any word that might have appealed to me at the moment as least contaminate with mean associations. In this string of pictures I believe the gist of the psalm to have consisted; I believe it had no more to say to me; and the result was consolatory. I would go to sleep dwelling with restfulness upon these images; they passed before me, besides, to an appropriate music; for I had already singled out from that rude psalm the one lovely verse which dwells in the minds of all, not growing old, not disgraced by its association with long Sunday tasks, a scarce conscious joy in childhood, in age a companion thought:—

> "In pastures green Thou leadest me,
> The quiet waters by."

The remainder of my childish recollections are all of the matter of what was read to me, and not of any manner in the words. If these pleased me, it was unconsciously; I listened for news of the great vacant world upon whose edge I stood; I listened for delightful plots that I might re-enact in play, and romantic scenes and circumstances that I might call up before me, with closed eyes, when I was tired of Scotland, and home and that weary prison of the sick-chamber in which I lay so long in durance. "Robinson Crusoe"; some of the books of that cheerful, ingenious, romantic soul, Mayne Reid; and a work rather gruesome and bloody for a child, but very picturesque, called "Paul Blake"; these are the three strongest impressions I remember: "The Swiss Family Robinson" came next, *longo intervallo*. At these I played, conjured up

their scenes, and delighted to hear them rehearsed unto seventy times seven. I am not sure but what "Paul Blake" came after I could read. It seems connected with a visit to the country, and an experience unforgettable. The day had been warm; H—— and I had played together charmingly all day in a sandy wilderness across the road; then came the evening with a great flash of colour and a heavenly sweetness in the air. Somehow my playmate had vanished, or is out of the story, as the sagas say, but I was sent into the village on an errand; and, taking a book of fairy tales, went down alone through a fir-wood, reading as I walked. How often since then has it befallen me to be happy even so; but that was the first time: the shock of that pleasure I have never since forgot, and if my mind serves me to the last, I never shall, for it was then that I knew I loved reading.

II

To pass from hearing literature to reading it is to take a great and dangerous step. With not a few, I think a large proportion of their pleasure then comes to an end; "the malady of not marking" overtakes them; they read thenceforward by the eye alone and hear never again the chime of fair words or the march of the stately period. *Non ragioniam* of these. But to all the step is dangerous; it involves coming of age; it is even a kind of second weaning. In the past all was at the choice of others; they chose, they digested, they read aloud for us and sang to their own tune the books of childhood. In the future we are to approach the silent, inexpressive type alone, like pioneers; and the choice of what we are to read is in our own hands thenceforward. For instance, in the passages already adduced, I detect and applaud the ear of my old nurse; they were of her choice, and she imposed them on my infancy, reading the works of others as a poet

would scarce dare to read his own ; gloating on the rhythm, dwelling with delight on assonances and alliterations. I know very well my mother must have been all the while trying to educate my taste upon more secular authors ; but the vigour and the continual opportunities of my nurse triumphed, and after a long search, I can find in these earliest volumes of my autobiography no mention of anything but nursery rhymes, the Bible, and Mr. M'Cheyne.

I suppose all children agree in looking back with delight on their school Readers. We might not now find so much pathos in " Bingen on the Rhine," " A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers," or in " The Soldier's Funeral," in the declamation of which I was held to have surpassed myself. " Robert's voice," said the master on this memorable occasion, " is not strong, but impressive " : an opinion which I was fool enough to carry home to my father ; who roasted me for years in consequence. I am sure one should not be so deliciously tickled by the humorous pieces :—

> " What, crusty ? cries Will in a taking,
> Who would not be crusty with half a year's baking ? "

I think this quip would leave us cold. The " Isles of Greece " seem rather tawdry too ; but on the " Address to the Ocean," or on " The Dying Gladiator," " time has writ no wrinkle."

> " 'Tis the morn, but dim and dark,
> Whither flies the silent lark ? "—

does the reader recall the moment when his eye first fell upon these lines in the Fourth Reader ; and " surprised with joy, impatient as the wind," he plunged into the sequel ? And there was another piece, this time in prose, which none can have forgotten ; many like me must have searched Dickens with zeal to find it again, and in its proper context, and have perhaps been conscious of some inconsiderable measure of disappointment, that it was only

Tom Pinch who drove, in such a pomp of poetry, to London.

But in the Reader we are still under guides. What a boy turns out for himself, as he rummages the bookshelves, is the real test and pleasure. My father's library was a spot of some austerity: the proceedings of learned societies, some Latin divinity, cyclopædias, physical science, and, above all, optics, held the chief place upon the shelves, and it was only in holes and corners that anything really legible existed as by accident. The "Parent's Assistant," "Rob Roy," "Waverley," and "Guy Mannering," the "Voyages of Captain Woods Rogers," Fuller's and Bunyan's "Holy Wars," "The Reflections of Robinson Crusoe," "The Female Bluebeard," G. Sand's "Mare au Diable"—(how came it in that grave assembly!), Ainsworth's "Tower of London," and four old volumes of *Punch*—these were the chief exceptions. In these latter, which made for years the chief of my diet, I very early fell in love (almost as soon as I could spell) with the Snob Papers. I knew them almost by heart, particularly the visit to the Pontos; and I remember my surprise when I found, long afterwards, that they were famous, and signed with a famous name; to me, as I read and admired them, they were the works of Mr. Punch. Time and again I tried to read "Rob Roy," with whom of course I was acquainted from the "Tales of a Grandfather"; time and again the early part, with Rashleigh and (think of it!) the adorable Diana, choked me off; and I shall never forget the pleasure and surprise with which, lying on the floor one summer evening, I struck of a sudden into the first scene with Andrew Fairservice. "The worthy Dr. Lightfoot"—"mistrysted with a bogle"—"a wheen green trash"—"Jenny, lass, I think I ha'e her": from that day to this the phrases have been unforgotten. I read on, I need scarce say; I came to Glasgow, I bided tryst on Glasgow Bridge, I met Rob Roy and the Bailie in the Tolbooth, all with transporting pleasure; and then the clouds gathered once more about my path; and

I dozed and skipped until I stumbled half asleep into the clachan of Aberfoyle, and the voices of Iverach and Galbraith recalled me to myself. With that scene and the defeat of Captain Thornton the book concluded; Helen and her sons shocked even the little schoolboy of nine or ten with their unreality; I read no more, or I did not grasp what I was reading; and years elapsed before I consciously met Diana and her father among the hills, or saw Rashleigh dying in the chair. When I think of that novel and that evening, I am impatient with all others; they seem but shadows and impostors; they cannot satisfy the appetite which this awakened; and I dare be known to think it the best of Sir Walter's by nearly as much as Sir Walter is the best of novelists. Perhaps Mr. Lang is right, and our first friends in the land of fiction are always the most real. And yet I had read before this "Guy Mannering," and some of "Waverley," with no such delighted sense of truth and humour, and I read immediately after the greater part of the Waverley Novels, and was never moved again in the same way or to the same degree. One circumstance is suspicious: my critical estimate of the Waverley Novels has scarce changed at all since I was ten. "Rob Roy," "Guy Mannering," and "Redgauntlet" first; then, a little lower, "The Fortunes of Nigel"; then, after a huge gulf, "Ivanhoe" and "Anne of Geierstein": the rest nowhere; such was the verdict of the boy. Since then "The Antiquary," "St. Ronan's Well," "Kenilworth," and "The Heart of Midlothian" have gone up in the scale; perhaps "Ivanhoe" and "Anne of Geierstein" have gone a trifle down; Diana Vernon has been added to my admirations in that enchanted world of "Rob Roy"; I think more of the letters in "Redgauntlet" and Peter Peebles, that dreadful piece of realism, I can now read about with equanimity, interest, and I had almost said pleasure, while to the childish critic he often caused unmixed distress. But the rest is the same; I could not finish "The Pirate" when I was a child, I have

never finished it yet ; " Peveril of the Peak " dropped half way through from my schoolboy hands, and though I have since waded to an end in a kind of wager with myself, the exercise was quite without enjoyment. There is something disquieting in these considerations. I still think the visit to Ponto's the best part of the " Book of Snobs " : does that mean that I was right when I was a child, or does it mean that I have never grown since then, that the child is not the man's father, but the man ? and that I came into the world with all my faculties complete, and have only learned sinsyne to be more tolerant of boredom ? . . .

XIV

REFLECTIONS AND REMARKS ON HUMAN LIFE

I. Justice and Justification.—(1) It is the business of this life to make excuses for others, but none for ourselves. We should be clearly persuaded of our own misconduct, for that is the part of knowledge in which we are most apt to be defective. (2) Even justice is no right of a man's own, but a thing, like the king's tribute, which shall never be his, but which he should strive to see rendered to another. None was ever just to me; none ever will be. You may reasonably aspire to be chief minister or sovereign pontiff: but not to be justly regarded in your own character and acts. You know too much to be satisfied. For justice is but an earthly currency, paid to appearances; you may see another superficially righted; but be sure he has got too little or too much; and in your own case rest content with what is paid you. It is more just than you suppose; that your virtues are misunderstood is a price you pay to keep your meannesses concealed. (3) When you seek to justify yourself to others, you may be sure you will plead falsely. If you fail, you have the shame of the failure; if you succeed, you will have made too much of it, and be unjustly esteemed upon the other side. (4) You have perhaps only one friend in the world, in whose esteem it is worth while for you to right yourself. Justification to indifferent persons is, at best, an impertinent intrusion. Let them think what they please; they will be the more likely to forgive you in the end. (5) It is a question hard to be resolved, whether you should at any time criminate

another to defend yourself. I have done it many times, and always had a troubled conscience for my pains.

II. Parent and Child.—(1) The love of parents for their children is, of all natural affections, the most ill-starred. It is not a love for the person, since it begins before the person has come into the world, and founds on an imaginary character and looks. Thus it is foredoomed to disappointment; and because the parent either looks for too much, or at least for something inappropriate, at his offspring's hands, it is too often insufficiently repaid. The natural bond, besides, is stronger from parent to child than from child to parent; and it is the side which confers benefits, not which receives them, that thinks most of a relation. (2) What do we owe our parents? No man can *owe* love; none can *owe* obedience. We owe, I think, chiefly pity; for we are the pledge of their dear and joyful union, we have been the solicitude of their days and the anxiety of their nights, we have made them, though by no will of ours, to carry the burthen of our sins, sorrows, and physical infirmities; and too many of us grow up at length to disappoint the purpose of their lives and requite their care and piety with cruel pangs. (3) *Mater Dolorosa.* It is the particular cross of parents that when the child grows up and becomes himself instead of that pale ideal they had preconceived, they must accuse their own harshness or indulgence for this natural result. They have all been like the duck and hatched swan's eggs, or the other way about; yet they tell themselves with miserable penitence that the blame lies with them; and had they sat more closely, the swan would have been a duck, and home-keeping, in spite of all. (4) A good son, who can fulfil what is expected of him, has done his work in life. He has to redeem the sins of many, and restore the world's confidence in children.

III. Dialogue on Character and Destiny between Two Puppets.—At the end of Chapter xxxiii. Count

Spada and the General of the Jesuits were left alone in the pavilion, while the course of the story was turned upon the doings of the virtuous hero. Profiting by this moment of privacy, the Jesuit turned with a very warning countenance upon the peer.

"Have a care, my lord," said he, raising a finger. "You are already no favourite with the author; and for my part, I begin to perceive from a thousand evidences that the narrative is drawing near a close. Yet a chapter or two at most, and you will be overtaken by some sudden and appalling judgment."

"I despise your womanish presentiments," replied Spada, "and count firmly upon another volume; I see a variety of reasons why my life should be prolonged to within a few pages of the end; indeed, I permit myself to expect resurrection in a sequel, or second part. You will scarce suggest that there can be any end to the newspaper; and you will certainly never convince me that the author, who cannot be entirely without sense, would have been at so great pains with my intelligence, gallant exterior, and happy and natural speech, merely to kick me hither and thither for two or three paltry chapters and then drop me at the end like a dumb personage. I know you priests are often infidels in secret. Pray, do you believe in an author at all?"

"Many do not, I am aware," replied the General softly; "even in the last chapter we encountered one, the self-righteous David Hume, who goes so far as to doubt the existence of the newspaper in which our adventures are now appearing; but it would neither become my cloth, nor do credit to my great experience, were I to meddle with these dangerous opinions. My alarm for you is not metaphysical, it is moral in its origin: You must be aware, my poor friend, that you are a very bad character—the worst indeed that I have met with in these pages. The author hates you, Count; and difficult as it may be to connect the idea of immortality—or, in plain terms, of a sequel

—with the paper and printer's ink of which your humanity is made, it is yet more difficult to foresee anything but punishment and pain for one who is justly hateful in the eyes of his creator."

"You take for granted many things that I shall not easily be persuaded to allow," replied the villain. "Do you really so far deceive yourself in your imagination as to fancy that the author is a friend to good? Read; read the book in which you figure; and you will soon disown such crude vulgarities. Lelio is a good character; yet only two chapters ago we left him in a fine predicament. His old servant was a model of the virtues, yet did he not miserably perish in that ambuscade upon the road to Poitiers? And as for the family of the bankrupt merchant, how is it possible for greater moral qualities to be alive with more irremediable misfortunes? And yet you continue to misrepresent an author to yourself, as a deity devoted to virtue and inimical to vice? Pray, if you have no pride in your own intellectual credit for yourself, spare at least the sensibilities of your associates."

"The purposes of the serial story," answered the Priest, "are, doubtless for some wise reason, hidden from those who act in it. To this limitation we must bow. But I ask every character to observe narrowly his own personal relations to the author. There, if nowhere else, we may glean some hint of his superior designs. Now I am myself a mingled personage, liable to doubts, to scruples, and to sudden revulsions of feeling; I reason continually about life, and frequently the result of my reasoning is to condemn or even to change my action. I am now convinced, for example, that I did wrong in joining in your plot against the innocent and most unfortunate Lelio. I told you so, you will remember, in the chapter which has just been concluded; and though I do not know whether you perceived the ardour and fluency with which I expressed myself, I am still confident in my own heart that I spoke at that moment not only with the warm approval, but under the

direct inspiration, of the author of the tale. I know, Spada, I tell you I *know*, that he loved me as I uttered these words ; and yet at other periods of my career I have been conscious of his indifference and dislike. You must not seek to reason me from this conviction ; for it is supplied me from higher authority than that of reason, and is indeed a part of my experience. It may be an illusion that I drove last night from Saumur ; it may be an illusion that we are now in the garden chamber of the château ; it may be an illusion that I am conversing with Count Spada ; you may be an illusion, Count, yourself ; but of three things I will remain eternally persuaded, that the author exists not only in the newspaper but in my own heart, that he loves me when I do well, and that he hates and despises me when I do otherwise."

" I too believe in the author," returned the Count. " I believe likewise in a sequel, written in finer style and probably cast in a still higher rank of society than the present story ; although I am not convinced that we shall then be conscious of our pre-existence here. So much of your argument is, therefore, beside the mark ; for to a certain point I am as orthodox as yourself. But where you begin to draw general conclusions from your own private experience, I must beg pointedly and finally to differ. You will not have forgotten, I believe, my daring and single-handed butchery of the five secret witnesses ? Nor the sleight of mind and dexterity of language with which I separated Lelio from the merchant's family ? These were not virtuous actions ; and yet, how am I to tell you ? I was conscious of a troubled joy, a glee, a hellish gusto in my author's bosom, which seemed to renew my vigour with every sentence, and which has indeed made the first of these passages accepted for a model of spirited narrative description, and the second for a masterpiece of wickedness and wit. What result, then, can be drawn from two experiences so contrary as yours and mine ? For my part, I lay it down as a principle, no author can be moral in a

merely human sense. And, to pursue the argument higher, how can you, for one instant, suppose the existence of free-will in puppets situated as we are in the thick of a novel which we do not even understand? And how, without free-will upon our parts, can you justify blame or approval on that of the author? We are in his hands; by a stroke of the pen, to speak reverently, he made us what we are; by a stroke of the pen he can utterly undo and transmute what he has made. In the very next chapter, my dear General, you may be shown up for an impostor, or I be stricken down in the tears of penitence and hurried into the retirement of a monastery!"

"You use an argument old as mankind, and difficult of answer," said the Priest. "I cannot justify the free-will of which I am usually conscious; nor will I ever seek to deny that this consciousness is interrupted. Sometimes events mount upon me with such swiftness and pressure that my choice is overwhelmed, and even to myself I seem to obey a will external to my own; and again I am sometimes so paralysed and impotent between alternatives that I am tempted to imagine a hesitation on the part of my author. But I contend, upon the other hand, for a limited free-will in the sphere of consciousness; and as it is in and by my consciousness that I exist to myself, I will not go on to inquire whether that free-will is valid as against the author, the newspaper, or even the readers of the story. And I contend, further, for a sort of empire or independence of our own characters when once created, which the author cannot or at least does not choose to violate. Hence Lelio was conceived upright, honest, courageous, and headlong; to that first idea all his acts and speeches must of necessity continue to answer; and the same, though with such different defects and qualities, applies to you, Count Spada, and to myself. We must act up to our characters; it is these characters that the author loves or despises; it is on account of them that we must

suffer or triumph, whether in this work or in a sequel. Such is my belief."

"It is pure Calvinistic election, my dear sir, and, by your leave, a very heretical position for a churchman to support," replied the Count. "Nor can I see how it removes the difficulty. I was not consulted as to my character; I might have chosen to be Lelio; I might have chosen to be yourself; I might even have preferred to figure in a different romance, or not to enter into the world of literature at all. And am I to be blamed or hated, because some one else wilfully and inhumanely made me what I am, and has continued ever since to encourage me in what are called my vices? You may say what you please, my dear sir, but if that is the case, I had rather be a telegram from the seat of war than a reasonable and conscious character in a romance; nay, and I have a perfect right to repudiate, loathe, curse, and utterly condemn the ruffian who calls himself the author."

"You have, as you say, a perfect right," replied the Jesuit; "and I am convinced that it will not affect him in the least."

"He shall have one slave the fewer for me," added the Count. "I discard my allegiance once for all."

"As you please," concluded the other; "but at least be ready, for I perceive we are about to enter on the scene."

And, indeed, just at that moment, Chapter xxxiv. being completed, Chapter xxxv., "The Count's Chastisement," began to appear in the columns of the newspaper.

IV. Solitude and Society.—(1) A little society is needful to show a man his failings; for if he lives entirely by himself, he has no occasion to fall, and like a soldier in time of peace, becomes both weak and vain. But a little solitude must be used, or we grow content with current virtues and forget the ideal. In society we lose scrupulous brightness of honour; in solitude we lose the courage necessary to face our own imperfections. (2) As

a question of pleasure, after a man has reached a certain age, I can hardly perceive much room to choose between them : each is in a way delightful, and each will please best after an experience of the other. (3) But solitude for its own sake should surely never be preferred. We are bound by the strongest obligations to busy ourselves amid the world of men, if it be only to crack jokes. The finest trait in the character of St. Paul was his readiness to be damned for the salvation of anybody else. And surely we should all endure a little weariness to make one face look brighter or one hour go more pleasantly in this mixed world. (4) It is our business here to speak, for it is by the tongue that we multiply ourselves most influentially. To speak kindly, wisely, and pleasantly is the first of duties, the easiest of duties, and the duty that is most blessed in its performance. For it is natural, it whiles away life, it spreads intelligence ; and it increases the acquaintance of man with man. (5) It is, besides, a good investment, for while all other pleasures decay, and even the delight in nature, Grandfather William is still bent to gossip. (6) Solitude is the climax of the negative virtues. When we go to bed after a solitary day we can tell ourselves that we have not been unkind nor dishonest nor untruthful ; and the negative virtues are agreeable to that dangerous faculty we call the conscience. That they should ever be admitted for a part of virtue is what I cannot explain. I do not care two straws for all the *nots*. (7) The positive virtues are imperfect ; they are even ugly in their imperfection : for man's acts, by the necessity of his being, are coarse and mingled. The kindest, in the course of a day of active kindnesses, will say some things rudely, and do some things cruelly ; the most honourable, perhaps, trembles at his nearness to a doubtful act. (8) Hence the solitary recoils from the practice of life, shocked by its unsightlinesses. But if I could only retain that superfine and guiding delicacy of the sense that grows in solitude, and still combine with it that courage of performance which is never abashed by any failure, but steadily

pursues its right and human design in a scene of imperfection, I might hope to strike in the long-run a conduct more tender to others and less humiliating to myself.

V. Selfishness and Egoism.—An unconscious, easy, selfish person shocks less, and is more easily loved, than one who is laboriously and egotistically unselfish. There is at least no fuss about the first; but the other parades his sacrifices, and so sells his favours too dear. Selfishness is calm, a force of nature: you might say the trees were selfish. But egoism is a piece of vanity; it must always take you into its confidence; it is uneasy, troublesome, seeking; it can do good, but not handsomely; it is uglier, because less dignified, than selfishness itself. But here I perhaps exaggerate to myself, because I am the one more than the other, and feel it like a hook in my mouth, at every step I take. Do what I will, this seems to spoil all.

VI. Right and Wrong.—It is the mark of a good action that it appears inevitable in the retrospect. We should have been cut-throats to do otherwise. And there's an end. We ought to know distinctly that we are damned for what we do wrong; but when we have done right, we have only been gentlemen, after all. There is nothing to make a work about.

VII. Discipline of Conscience.—(1) Never allow your mind to dwell on your own misconduct: that is ruin. The conscience has morbid sensibilities; it must be employed but not indulged, like the imagination or the stomach. (2) Let each stab suffice for the occasion; to play with this spiritual pain turns to penance; and a person easily learns to feel good by dallying with the consciousness of having done wrong. (3) Shut your eyes hard against the recollection of your sins. Do not be afraid, you will not be able to forget them. (4) You will always do wrong: you must try to get used to that, my son. It is a small matter to

make a work about, when all the world is in the same case. I meant when I was a young man to write a great poem ; and now I am cobbling little prose articles and in excellent good spirits, I thank you. So, too, I meant to lead a life that should keep mounting from the first ; and though I have been repeatedly down again below sea-level, and am scarce higher than when I started, I am as keen as ever for that enterprise. Our business in this world is not to succeed, but to continue to fail, in good spirits. (5) There is but one test of a good life : that the man shall continue to grow more difficult about his own behaviour. That is to be good : there is no other virtue attainable. The virtues we admire in the saint and the hero are the fruits of a happy constitution. You, for your part, must not think you will ever be a good man, for these are born and not made. You will have your own reward, if you keep on growing better than you were—how do I say ? if you do not keep on growing worse. (6) A man is one thing, and must be exercised in all his faculties. Whatever side of you is neglected, whether it is the muscles, or the taste for art, or the desire for virtue, that which is cultivated will suffer in proportion. —— was greatly tempted, I remember, to do a very dishonest act, in order that he might pursue his studies in art. When he consulted me, I advised him not (putting it that way for once), because his art would suffer. (7) It might be fancied that if we could only study all sides of our being in an exact proportion, we should attain wisdom. But in truth a chief part of education is to exercise one set of faculties *à outrance*—one, since we have not the time so to practise all ; thus the dilettante misses the kernel of the matter ; and the man who has wrung forth the secret of one part of life knows more about the others than he who has tepidly circumnavigated all. (8) Thus, one must be your profession, the rest can only be your delights ; and virtue had better be kept for the latter, for it enters into all, but none enters by necessity into it. You will learn a great deal of virtue by studying any art ; but

nothing of any art in the study of virtue. (9) The study of conduct has to do with grave problems; not every action should be higgled over; one of the leading virtues therein is to let oneself alone. But if you make it your chief employment, you are sure to meddle too much. This is the great error of those who are called pious. Although the war of virtue be unending except with life, hostilities are frequently suspended, and the troops go into winter quarters; but the pious will not profit by these times of truce; where their conscience can perceive no sin, they will find a sin in that very innocency; and so they pervert, to their annoyance, those seasons which God gives to us for repose and a reward. (10) The nearest approximation to sense in all this matter lies with the Quakers. There must be no *will*-worship; how much more, no *will*-repentance! The damnable consequence of set seasons, even for prayer, is to have a man continually posturing to himself, till his conscience is taught as many tricks as a pet monkey, and the gravest expressions are left with a perverted meaning. (11) For my part, I should try to secure some part of every day for meditation, above all in the early morning and the open air; but how that time was to be improved I should leave to circumstance and the inspiration of the hour. Nor if I spent it in whistling or numbering my footsteps, should I consider it misspent for that. I should have given my conscience a fair field; when it has anything to say, I know too well it can speak daggers; therefore, for this time, my hard taskmaster has given me a holyday, and I may go in again rejoicing to my breakfast and the human business of the day.

VIII. Gratitude to God.—(1) To the gratitude that becomes us in this life, I can set no limit. Though we steer after a fashion, yet we must sail according to the winds and currents. After what I have done, what might I not have done? That I have still the courage to attempt my life, that I am not now overladen with dishonours, to whom

do I owe it but to the gentle ordering of circumstances in the great design? More has not been done to me than I can bear; I have been marvellously restrained and helped; not unto us, O Lord! (2) I cannot forgive God for the suffering of others; when I look abroad upon His world and behold its cruel destinies, I turn from Him with disaffection; nor do I conceive that He will blame me for the impulse. But when I consider my own fates, I grow conscious of His gentle dealing: I see Him chastise with helpful blows, I feel His stripes to be caresses; and this knowledge is my comfort that reconciles me to the world. (3) All those whom I now pity with indignation, are perhaps not less fatherly dealt with than myself. I do right to be angry: yet they, perhaps, if they lay aside heat and temper, and reflect with patience on their lot, may find everywhere, in their worst trials, the same proofs of a divine affection. (4) While we have little to try us, we are angry with little; small annoyances do not bear their justification on their faces; but when we are overtaken by a great sorrow or perplexity, the greatness of our concern sobers us so that we see more clearly and think with more consideration. I speak for myself; nothing grave has yet befallen me but I have been able to reconcile my mind to its occurrence, and see in it, from my own little and partial point of view, an evidence of a tender and protecting God. Even the misconduct into which I have been led has been blessed to my improvement. If I did not sin, and that so glaringly that my conscience is convicted on the spot, I do not know what I should become, but I feel sure I should grow worse. The man of very regular conduct is too often a prig, if he be not worse—a rabbi. I, for my part, want to be startled out of my conceits; I want to be put to shame in my own eyes; I want to feel the bridle in my mouth, and be continually reminded of my own weakness and the omnipotence of circumstances. (5) If I from my spy-hole, looking with purblind eyes upon the least part of a fraction of the universe, yet perceive in my own destiny some broken

evidences of a plan and some signals of an overruling goodness ; shall I then be so mad as to complain that all cannot be deciphered ? Shall I not rather wonder, with infinite and grateful surprise, that in so vast a scheme I seem to have been able to read, however little, and that that little was encouraging to faith ?

IX. Blame.—What comes from without and what from within, how much of conduct proceeds from the spirit or how much from circumstances, what is the part of choice and what the part of the selection offered, where personal character begins or where, if anywhere, it escapes at all from the authority of nature, these are questions of curiosity and eternally indifferent to right and wrong. Our theory of blame is utterly sophisticated and untrue to man's experience. We are as much ashamed of a pimpled face that came to us by natural descent as by one that we have earned by our excesses, and rightly so ; since the two cases, in so much as they unfit us for the easier sort of pleasing and put an obstacle in the path of love, are exactly equal in their consequence. We look aside from the true question. We cannot blame others at all ; we can only punish them ; and ourselves we blame indifferently for a deliberate crime, a thoughtless brusquerie, or an act done without volition in an ecstasy of madness. We blame ourselves from two considerations : first, because another has suffered ; and second, because, in so far as we have again done wrong, we can look forward with the less confidence to what remains of our career. Shall we repent this failure ? It is there that the consciousness of sin most cruelly affects us ; it is in view of this that a man cries out, in exaggeration, that his heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things. We all tacitly subscribe this judgment : Woe unto him by whom offences shall come ! We accept palliations for our neighbours ; we dare not, in sight of our own soul, accept them for ourselves. We may not be to blame ; we may be conscious of no free

will in the matter, of a possession, on the other hand, or an irresistible tyranny of circumstance,—yet we know, in another sense, we are to blame for all. Our right to live, to eat, to share in mankind's pleasures, lies precisely in this: that we must be persuaded we can on the whole live rather beneficially than hurtfully to others. Remove this persuasion, and the man has lost his right. That persuasion is our dearest jewel, to which we must sacrifice the life itself to which it entitles us. For it is better to be dead than degraded.

X. Marriage.—(1) No considerate man can approach marriage without deep concern. I, he will think, who have made hitherto so poor a business of my own life, am now about to embrace the responsibility of another's. Henceforth, there shall be two to suffer from my faults; and that other is the one whom I most desire to shield from suffering. In view of our impotence and folly, it seems an act of presumption to involve another's destiny with ours. We should hesitate to assume command of an army or a trading-smack; shall we not hesitate to become surety for the life and happiness, now and henceforward, of our dearest friend? To be nobody's enemy but one's own, although it is never possible to any, can least of all be possible to one who is married. (2) I would not so much fear to give hostages to fortune, if fortune ruled only in material things; but fortune, as we call those minor and more inscrutable workings of providence, rules also in the sphere of conduct. I am not so blind but that I know I might be a murderer or even a traitor to-morrow; and now, as if I were not already too feelingly alive to my misdeeds, I must choose out the one person whom I most desire to please, and make her the daily witness of my failures, I must give a part in all my dishonours to the one person who can feel them more keenly than myself. (3) In all our daring, magnanimous human way of life, I find nothing more bold than this. To go into battle is but

a small thing by comparison. It is the last act of committal. After that, there is no way left, not even suicide, but to be a good man. (4) She will help you, let us pray. And yet she is in the same case ; she, too, has daily made shipwreck of her own happiness and worth ; it is with a courage no less irrational than yours, that she also ventures on this new experiment of life. Two who have failed severally, now join their fortunes with a wavering hope. (5) But it is from the boldness of the enterprise that help springs. To take home to your hearth that living witness whose blame will most affect you, to eat, to sleep, to live with your most admiring and thence most exacting judge, is not this to domesticate the living God ? Each becomes a conscience to the other, legible like a clock upon the chimney-piece. Each offers to his mate a figure of the consequence of human acts. And while I may still continue by my inconsiderate or violent life to spread far-reaching havoc throughout man's confederacy, I can do so no more, at least, in ignorance and levity ; one face shall wince before me in the flesh ; I have taken home the sorrows I create to my own hearth and bed ; and though I continue to sin, it must be now with open eyes.

XI. Idleness and Industry.—I remember a time when I was very idle ; and lived and profited by that humour. I have no idea why I ceased to be so, yet I scarce believe I have the power to return to it ; it is a change of age. I made consciously a thousand little efforts, but the determination from which these arose came to me while I slept and in the way of growth. I have had a thousand skirmishes to keep myself at work upon particular mornings, and sometimes the affair was hot ; but of that great change of campaign, which decided all this part of my life, and turned me from one whose business was to shirk into one whose business was to strive and persevere,—it seems as though all that had been done by some one else. The life of Goethe affected me ; so did that of Balzac ; and some very

noble remarks by the latter in a pretty bad book, the "Cousine Bette." I daresay I could trace some other influences in the change. All I mean is, I was never conscious of a struggle, nor registered a vow, nor seemingly had anything personally to do with the matter. I came about like a well-handled ship. There stood at the wheel that unknown steersman whom we call God.

XII. Courage.—Courage is the principal virtue, for all the others presuppose it. If you are afraid, you may do anything. Courage is to be cultivated, and some of the negative virtues may be sacrificed in the cultivation.

XIII. Results of Action.—The result is the reward of actions, not the test. The result is a child born; if it be beautiful and healthy, well: if club-footed or crook-back, perhaps well also. We cannot direct. . .

[1878 ?]

XV

THE IDEAL HOUSE

Two things are necessary in any neighbourhood where we propose to spend a life: a desert and some living water.

There are many parts of the earth's face which offer the necessary combination of a certain wildness with a kindly variety. A great prospect is desirable, but the want may be otherwise supplied; even greatness can be found on the small scale; for the mind and the eye measure differently. Bold rocks near hand are more inspiriting than distant Alps, and the thick fern upon a Surrey heath makes a fine forest for the imagination, and the dotted yew trees noble mountains. A Scottish moor with birches and firs grouped here and there upon a knoll, or one of those rocky sea-side deserts of Provence overgrown with rosemary and thyme and smoking with aroma, are places where the mind is never weary. Forests, being more enclosed, are not at first sight so attractive, but they exercise a spell; they must, however, be diversified with either heath or rock, and are hardly to be considered perfect without conifers. Even sand-hills, with their intricate plan, and their gulls and rabbits, will stand well for the necessary desert.

The house must be within hail of either a little river or the sea. A great river is more fit for poetry than to adorn a neighbourhood; its sweep of waters increases the scale of the scenery and the distance of one notable object from another; and a lively burn gives us, in the space of a few yards, a greater variety of promontory and islet, of cascade, shallow goil, and boiling pool, with answerable changes both

of song and colour, than a navigable stream in many hundred miles. The fish, too, make a more considerable feature of the brook-side, and the trout plumping in the shadow takes the ear. A stream should, besides, be narrow enough to cross, or the burn hard by a bridge, or we are at once shut out of Eden. The quantity of water need be of no concern, for the mind sets the scale, and can enjoy a Niagara Fall of thirty inches. Let us approve the singer of

> "Shallow rivers, by whose falls
> Melodious birds sing madrigals."

If the sea is to be our ornamental water, choose an open seaboard with a heavy beat of surf; one much broken in outline, with small havens and dwarf headlands; if possible a few islets; and as a first necessity, rocks reaching out into deep water. Such a rock on a calm day is a better station than the top of Teneriffe or Chimborazo. In short, both for the desert and the water, the conjunction of many near and bold details is bold scenery for the imagination and keeps the mind alive.

Given these two prime luxuries, the nature of the country where we are to live is, I had almost said, indifferent; after that, inside the garden, we can construct a country of our own. Several old trees, a considerable variety of level, several well-grown hedges to divide our garden into provinces, a good extent of old well-set turf, and thickets of shrubs and evergreens to be cut into and cleared at the new owner's pleasure, are the qualities to be sought for in your chosen land. Nothing is more delightful than a succession of small lawns, opening one out of the other through tall hedges; these have all the charm of the old bowling-green repeated, do not require the labour of many trimmers, and afford a series of changes. You must have much lawn against the early summer, so as to have a great field of daisies, the year's morning frost; as you must have a wood of lilacs, to enjoy to the full the period of their

blossoming. Hawthorn is another of the spring's ingredients ; but it is even best to have a rough public lane at one side of your enclosure which, at the right season, shall become an avenue of bloom and odour. The old flowers are the best and should grow carelessly in corners. Indeed, the ideal fortune is to find an old garden, once very richly cared for, since sunk into neglect, and to tend, not repair, that neglect ; it will thus have a smack of nature and wildness which skilful dispositions cannot overtake. The gardener should be an idler, and have a gross partiality to the kitchen plots : an eager or toilful gardener misbecomes the garden landscape ; a tasteful gardener will be ever meddling, will keep the borders raw, and take the bloom off nature. Close adjoining, if you are in the south, an olive-yard, if in the north, a swarded apple-orchard reaching to the stream, completes your miniature domain ; but this is perhaps best entered through a door in the high fruit-wall ; so that you close the door behind you on your sunny plots, your hedges and evergreen jungle, when you go down to watch the apples falling in the pool. It is a golden maxim to cultivate the garden for the nose, and the eyes will take care of themselves. Nor must the ear be forgotten : without birds, a garden is a prison-yard. There is a garden near Marseilles on a steep hill-side, walking by which, upon a sunny morning, your ear will suddenly be ravished with a burst of small and very cheerful singing : some score of cages being set out there to sun the occupants. This is a heavenly surprise to any passer-by ; but the price paid, to keep so many ardent and winged creatures from their liberty, will make the luxury too dear for any thoughtful pleasure-lover. There is only one sort of bird that I can tolerate caged, though even then I think it hard, and that is what is called in France the Bec-d'Argent. I once had two of these pigmies in captivity ; and in the quiet, bare house upon a silent street where I was then living, their song, which was not much louder than a bee's, but airily musical, kept me in a perpetual good humour.

I put the cage upon my table when I worked, carried it with me when I went for meals, and kept it by my head at night: the first thing in the morning, these *maestrini* would pipe up. But these, even if you can pardon their imprisonment, are for the house. In the garden the wild birds must plant a colony, a chorus of the lesser warblers that should be almost deafening, a blackbird in the lilacs, a nightingale down the lane, so that you must stroll to hear it, and yet a little farther, tree-tops populous with rooks.

Your house should not command much outlook; it should be set deep and green, though upon rising ground, or, if possible, crowning a knoll, for the sake of drainage. Yet it must be open to the east, or you will miss the sunrise; sunset occurring so much later, you can go up a few steps and look the other way. A house of more than two stories is a mere barrack; indeed the ideal is of one story, raised upon cellars. If the rooms are large, the house may be small: a single room, lofty, spacious, and lightsome, is more palatial than a castleful of cabinets and cupboards. Yet size in a house, and some extent and intricacy of corridor, is certainly delightful to the flesh. The reception room should be, if possible, a place of many recesses, which are "petty retiring places for conference"; but it must have one long wall with a divan: for a day spent upon a divan, among a world of cushions, is as full of diversion as to travel. The eating-room, in the French mode, should be *ad hoc:* unfurnished, but with a buffet, the table, necessary chairs, one or two of Canaletto's etchings, and a tile fire-place for the winter. In neither of these public places should there be anything beyond a shelf or two of books; but the passages may be one library from end to end, and the stair, if there be one, lined with volumes in old leather, very brightly carpeted, and leading half-way up, and by way of landing, to a windowed recess with a fire-place; this window, almost alone in the house, should command a handsome prospect. Husband and wife must

each possess a studio ; on the woman's sanctuary I hesitate to dwell, and turn to the man's. The walls are shelved waist-high for books, and the top thus forms a continuous table running round the wall. Above are prints, a large map of the neighbourhood, a Corot and a Claude or two. The room is very spacious, and the five tables and two chairs are but as islands. One table is for actual work, one close by for references in use ; one, very large, for MSS. or proofs that wait their turn ; one kept clear for an occasion ; and the fifth is the map table, groaning under a collection of large-scale maps and charts. Of all books these are the least wearisome to read and the richest in matter ; the course of roads and rivers, the contour lines and the forests in the maps—the reefs, soundings, anchors, sailing marks and little pilot-pictures in the charts—and, in both, the bead-roll of names, make them of all printed matter the most fit to stimulate and satisfy the fancy. The chair in which you write is very low and easy, and backed into a corner ; at one elbow the fire twinkles ; close at the other, if you are a little inhumane, your cage of silver-bills are twittering into song.

Joined along by a passage, you may reach the great sunny, glass-roofed, and tiled gymnasium, at the far end of which, lined with bright marble, is your plunge and swimming bath, fitted with a capacious boiler.

The whole loft of the house from end to end makes one undivided chamber ; here are set forth tables on which to model imaginary or actual countries in putty or plaster, with tools and hardy pigments ; a carpenter's bench ; and a spared corner for photography, while at the far end a space is kept clear for playing soldiers. Two boxes contain the two armies of some five hundred horse and foot ; two others the ammunition of each side, and a fifth the foot-rules and the three colours of chalk, with which you lay down, or, after a day's play, refresh the outlines of the country ; red or white for the two kinds of road (according as they are suitable or not for the passage of ordnance),

and blue for the course of the obstructing rivers. Here I foresee that you may pass much happy time ; against a good adversary a game may well continue for a month ; for with armies so considerable three moves will occupy an hour. It will be found to set an excellent edge on this diversion if one of the players shall, every day or so, write a report of the operations in the character of army correspondent.

I have left to the last the little room for winter evenings. This should be furnished in warm positive colours, and sofas and floor thick with rich furs. The hearth, where you burn wood of aromatic quality on silver dogs, tiled round about with Bible pictures ; the seats deep and easy ; a single Titian in a gold frame ; a white bust or so upon a bracket ; a rack for the journals of the week ; a table for the books of the year ; and close in a corner the three shelves full of eternal books that never weary : Shakespeare, Molière, Montaigne, Lamb, Sterne, De Musset's comedies (the one volume open at *Carmosine* and the other at *Fantasio*) ; the " Arabian Nights," and kindred stories, in Weber's solemn volumes ; Borrow's " Bible in Spain," the " Pilgrim's Progress," " Guy Mannering," and " Rob Roy," " Monte Cristo," and the " Vicomte de Bragelonne," immortal Boswell sole among biographers, Chaucer, Herrick, and the " State Trials."

The bedrooms are large, airy, with almost no furniture, floors of varnished wood, and at the bed-head, in case of insomnia, one shelf of books of a particular and dippable order, such as " Pepys," the " Paston Letters," Burt's " Letters from the Highlands," or the " Newgate Calendar." . . .

[1884 ?]

LAY MORALS

The following chapters of a projected treatise on Ethics were drafted at Edinburgh in the spring of 1879. *They are unrevised, and must not be taken as representing, either as to matter or form, their author's final thoughts; but they contain much that is essentially characteristic of his mind.*

LAY MORALS

CHAPTER I

The problem of education is twofold: first to know, and then to utter. Every one who lives any semblance of an inner life thinks more nobly and profoundly than he speaks; and the best of teachers can impart only broken images of the truth which they perceive. Speech which goes from one to another between two natures, and, what is worse, between two experiences, is doubly relative. The speaker buries his meaning; it is for the hearer to dig it up again; and all speech, written or spoken, is in a dead language until it finds a willing and prepared hearer. Such, moreover, is the complexity of life, that when we condescend upon details in our advice, we may be sure we condescend on error; and the best of education is to throw out some magnanimous hints. No man was ever so poor that he could express all he has in him by words, looks, or actions; his true knowledge is eternally incommunicable, for it is a knowledge of himself; and his best wisdom comes to him by no process of the mind, but in a supreme self-dictation, which keeps varying from hour to hour in its dictates with the variation of events and circumstances.

A few men of picked nature, full of faith, courage, and contempt for others, try earnestly to set forth as much as they can grasp of this inner law; but the vast majority, when they come to advise the young, must be content to retail certain doctrines which have been already retailed to them in their own youth. Every generation has to educate another which it has brought upon the stage.

People who readily accept the responsibility of parentship, having very different matters in their eye, are apt to feel rueful when their responsibility falls due. What are they to tell the child about life and conduct, subjects on which they have themselves so few and such confused opinions? Indeed, I do not know; the least said, perhaps, the soonest mended; and yet the child keeps asking, and the parent must find some words to say in his own defence. Where does he find them? and what are they when found?

As a matter of experience, and in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, he will instil into his wide-eyed brat three bad things; the terror of public opinion, and, flowing from that as a fountain, the desire of wealth and applause. Besides these, or what might be deduced as corollaries from these, he will teach not much else of any effective value: some dim notions of divinity, perhaps, and book-keeping, and how to walk through a quadrille.

But, you may tell me, the young people are taught to be Christians. It may be want of penetration, but I have not yet been able to perceive it. As an honest man, whatever we teach, and be it good or evil, it is not the doctrine of Christ. What He taught (and in this He is like all other teachers worthy of the name) was not a code of rules, but a ruling spirit; not truths, but a spirit of truth; not views, but a view. What He showed us was an attitude of mind. Towards the many considerations on which conduct is built, each man stands in a certain relation. He takes life on a certain principle. He has a compass in his spirit which points in a certain direction. It is the attitude, the relation, the point of the compass, that is the whole body and gist of what he has to teach us; in this, the details are comprehended; out of this the specific precepts issue, and by this, and this only, can they be explained and applied. And thus, to learn aright from any teacher, we must first of all, like a historical artist, think ourselves into sympathy

with his position and, in the technical phrase, create his character. A historian confronted with some ambiguous politician, or an actor charged with a part, have but one pre-occupation; they must search all round and upon every side, and grope for some central conception which is to explain and justify the most extreme details; until that is found, the politician is an enigma, or perhaps a quack, and the part a tissue of fustian sentiment and big words; but once that is found, all enters into a plan, a human nature appears, the politician or the stage-king is understood from point to point, from end to end. This is a degree of trouble which will be gladly taken by a very humble artist; but not even the terror of eternal fire can teach a business man to bend his imagination to such athletic efforts. Yet without this, all is vain; until we understand the whole, we shall understand none of the parts; and otherwise we have no more than broken images and scattered words; the meaning remains buried; and the language in which our prophet speaks to us is a dead language in our ears.

Take a few of Christ's sayings and compare them with our current doctrines.

"*Ye cannot,*" He says, "*serve God and Mammon.*" Cannot? And our whole system is to teach us how we can!

"*The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.*" Are they? I had been led to understand the reverse: that the Christian merchant, for example, prospered exceedingly in his affairs; that honesty was the best policy; that an author of repute had written a conclusive treatise "How to make the best of both worlds." Of both worlds indeed! Which am I to believe then—Christ or the author of repute?

"*Take no thought for the morrow.*" Ask the Successful Merchant; interrogate your own heart; and you will have to admit that this is not only a silly but an immoral position. All we believe, all we hope, all we honour in ourselves or

our contemporaries, stands condemned in this one sentence, or, if you take the other view, condemns the sentence as unwise and inhumane. We are not then of the "same mind that was in Christ." We disagree with Christ. Either Christ meant nothing, or else He or we must be in the wrong. Well says Thoreau, speaking of some texts from the New Testament, and finding a strange echo of another style which the reader may recognise: "Let but one of these sentences be rightly read from any pulpit in the land, and there would not be left one stone of that meeting-house upon another."

It may be objected that these are what are called "hard sayings"; and that a man, or an education, may be very sufficiently Christian although it leave some of these sayings upon one side. But this is a very gross delusion. Although truth is difficult to state, it is both easy and agreeable to receive, and the mind runs out to meet it ere the phrase be done. The universe, in relation to what any man can say of it, is plain, patent, and staringly comprehensible. In itself, it is a great and travailing ocean, unsounded, unvoyageable, an eternal mystery to man; or, let us say, it is a monstrous and impassable mountain, one side of which, and a few near slopes and foothills, we can dimly study with these mortal eyes. But what any man can say of it, even in his highest utterance, must have relation to this little and plain corner, which is no less visible to us than to him. We are looking on the same map; it will go hard if we cannot follow the demonstration. The longest and most abstruse flight of a philosopher becomes clear and shallow, in the flash of a moment, when we suddenly perceive the aspect and drift of his intention. The longest argument is but a finger pointed; once we get our own finger rightly parallel, and we see what the man meant, whether it be a new star or an old street-lamp. And briefly, if a saying is hard to understand, it is because we are thinking of something else.

But to be a true disciple is to think of the same things

as our prophet, and to think of different things in the same order. To be of the same mind with another is to see all things in the same perspective ; it is not to agree in a few indifferent matters near at hand and not much debated ; it is to follow him in his farthest flights, to see the force of his hyperboles, to stand so exactly in the centre of his vision that whatever he may express, your eyes will light at once on the original, that whatever he may see to declare, your mind will at once accept. You do not belong to the school of any philosopher, because you agree with him that theft is, on the whole, objectionable, or that the sun is overhead at noon. It is by the hard sayings that discipleship is tested. We are all agreed about the middling and indifferent parts of knowledge and morality ; even the most soaring spirits too often take them tamely upon trust. But the man, the philosopher or the moralist, does not stand upon these chance adhesions ; and the purpose of any system looks towards those extreme points where it steps valiantly beyond tradition and returns with some covert hint of things outside. Then only can you be certain that the words are not words of course, nor mere echoes of the past ; then only are you sure that if he be indicating anything at all, it is a star and not a street-lamp ; then only do you touch the heart of the mystery ; since it was for these that the author wrote his book.

Now, every now and then, and indeed surprisingly often, Christ finds a word that transcends all commonplace morality ; every now and then He quits the beaten track to pioneer the unexpressed, and throws out a pregnant and magnanimous hyperbole ; for it is only by some bold poetry of thought that men can be strung up above the level of everyday conceptions to take a broader look upon experience or accept some higher principle of conduct. To a man who is of the same mind that was in Christ, who stands at some centre not too far from His, and looks at the world and conduct from some not dissimilar or, at least, not opposing attitude—or, shortly, to a man who is of

Christ's philosophy—every such saying should come home with a thrill of joy and corroboration ; he should feel each one below his feet as another sure foundation in the flux of time and chance ; each should be another proof that in the torrent of the years and generations, where doctrines and great armaments and empires are swept away and swallowed, he stands immovable, holding by the eternal stars. But, alas ! at this juncture of the ages it is not so with us ; on each and every such occasion our whole fellowship of Christians falls back in disapproving wonder and implicitly denies the saying. Christians ! the farce is impudently broad. Let us stand up in the sight of heaven and confess. The ethics that we hold are those of Benjamin Franklin. *Honesty is the best policy*, is perhaps a hard saying ; it is certainly one by which a wise man of these days will not too curiously direct his steps ; but I think it shows a glimmer of meaning to even our most dimmed intelligences ; I think we perceive a principle behind it ; I think, without hyperbole, we are of the same mind that was in Benjamin Franklin.

CHAPTER II

But, I may be told, we teach the ten commandments, where a world of morals lies condensed, the very pith and epitome of all ethics and religion ; and a young man with these precepts engraved upon his mind must follow after profit with some conscience and Christianity of method. A man cannot go very far astray who neither dishonours his parents, nor kills, nor commits adultery, nor steals, nor bears false witness ; for these things, rightly thought out, cover a vast field of duty.

Alas ! what is a precept ? It is at best an illustration ; it is case law at the best which can be learned by precept. The letter is not only dead, but killing ; the spirit which underlies, and cannot be uttered, alone is true and helpful. This is trite to sickness ; but familiarity has a cunning disenchantment ; in a day or two she can steal all beauty from the mountain tops ; and the most startling words begin to fall dead upon the ear after several repetitions. If you see a thing too often, you no longer see it ; if you hear a thing too often, you no longer hear it. Our attention requires to be surprised ; and to carry a fort by assault, or to gain a thoughtful hearing from the ruck of mankind, are feats of about equal difficulty and must be tried by not dissimilar means. The whole Bible has thus lost its message for the common run of hearers ; it has become mere words of course ; and the parson may bawl himself scarlet and beat the pulpit like a thing possessed, but his hearers will continue to nod ; they are strangely at peace ; they know all he has to say ; ring the old bell as you choose, it is still the old bell and it cannot startle their composure.

And so with this byword about the letter and the spirit. It is quite true, no doubt; but it has no meaning in the world to any man of us. Alas! it has just this meaning, and neither more nor less: that while the spirit is true, the letter is eternally false.

The shadow of a great oak lies abroad upon the ground at noon, perfect, clear, and stable like the earth. But let a man set himself to mark out the boundary with cords and pegs, and were he never so nimble and never so exact, what with the multiplicity of the leaves and the progression of the shadow as it flees before the travelling sun, long ere he has made the circuit the whole figure will have changed. Life may be compared, not to a single tree, but to a great and complicated forest; circumstance is more swiftly changing than a shadow, language much more inexact than the tools of a surveyor; from day to day the trees fall and are renewed; the very essences are fleeting as we look; and the whole world of leaves is swinging tempest-tossed among the winds of time. Look now for your shadows. O man of formulæ, is this a place for you? Have you fitted the spirit to a single case? Alas, in the cycle of the ages when shall such another be proposed for the judgment of man? Now when the sun shines and the winds blow, the wood is filled with an innumerable multitude of shadows, tumultuously tossed and changing; and at every gust the whole carpet leaps and becomes new. Can you or your heart say more?

Look back now, for a moment, on your own brief experience of life; and although you lived it feelingly in your own person, and had every step of conduct burned in by pains and joys upon your memory, tell me what definite lesson does experience hand on from youth to manhood, or from both to age? The settled tenor which first strikes the eye is but the shadow of a delusion. This is gone; that never truly was; and you yourself are altered beyond recognition. Times and men and circumstances change about your changing character, with a speed of

which no earthly hurricane affords an image. What was the best yesterday, is it still the best in this changed theatre of a to-morrow? Will your own Past truly guide you in your own violent and unexpected Future? And if this be questionable, with what humble, with what hopeless eyes, should we not watch other men driving beside us on their unknown careers, seeing with unlike eyes, impelled by different gales, doing and suffering in another sphere of things?

And as the authentic clue to such a labyrinth and change of scene, do you offer me these two score words? these five bald prohibitions? For the moral precepts are no more than five; the first four deal rather with matters of observance than of conduct; the tenth, *Thou shalt not covet*, stands upon another basis, and shall be spoken of ere long. The Jews, to whom they were first given, in the course of years began to find these precepts insufficient; and made an addition of no less than six hundred and fifty others! They hoped to make a pocket-book of reference on morals, which should stand to life in some such relation, say, as Hoyle stands in to the scientific game of whist. The comparison is just, and condemns the design; for those who play by rule will never be more than tolerable players; and you and I would like to play our game in life to the noblest and the most divine advantage. Yet if the Jews took a petty and huckstering view of conduct, what view do we take ourselves, who callously leave youth to go forth into the enchanted forest, full of spells and dire chimeras, with no guidance more complete than is afforded by these five precepts?

Honour thy father and thy mother. Yes, but does that mean to obey? and if so, how long and how far? *Thou shalt not kill.* Yet the very intention and purport of the prohibition may be best fulfilled by killing. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.* But some of the ugliest adulteries are committed in the bed of marriage and under the sanction of religion and law. *Thou shalt not bear false witness.*

How ? by speech or by silence also ? or even by a smile ? *Thou shalt not steal.* Ah, that indeed ! But what is *to steal ?*

To steal ? It is another word to be construed ; and who is to be our guide ? The police will give us one construction, leaving the world only that least minimum of meaning without which society would fall in pieces ; but surely we must take some higher sense than this ; surely we hope more than a bare subsistence for mankind ; surely we wish mankind to prosper and go on from strength to strength, and ourselves to live rightly in the eye of some more exacting potentate than a policeman. The approval or the disapproval of the police must be eternally indifferent to a man who is both valorous and good. There is extreme discomfort, but no shame, in the condemnation of the law. The law represents that modicum of morality which can be squeezed out of the ruck of mankind ; but what is that to me, who aim higher and seek to be my own more stringent judge ? I observe with pleasure that no brave man has ever given a rush for such considerations. The Japanese have a nobler and more sentimental feeling for this social bond into which we all are born when we come into the world, and whose comforts and protection we all indifferently share throughout our lives :—but even to them, no more than to our Western saints and heroes, does the law of the state supersede the higher law of duty. Without hesitation and without remorse, they transgress the stiffest enactments rather than abstain from doing right. But the accidental superior duty being thus fulfilled, they at once return in allegiance to the common duty of all citizens ; and hasten to denounce themselves ; and value at an equal rate their just crime and their equally just submission to its punishment.

The evading of the police will not long satisfy an active conscience or a thoughtful head. But to show you how one or the other may trouble a man, and what a vast extent of frontier is left unridden by this invaluable eighth

commandment, let me tell you a few pages out of a young man's life.

He was a friend of mine; a young man like others; generous, flighty, as variable as youth itself, but always with some high motives and on the search for higher thoughts of life. I should tell you at once that he thoroughly agrees with the eighth commandment. But he got hold of some unsettling works, the New Testament among others, and this loosened his views of life and led him into many perplexities. As he was the son of a man in a certain position, and well off, my friend had enjoyed from the first the advantages of education, nay, he had been kept alive through a sickly childhood by constant watchfulness, comforts, and change of air; for all of which he was indebted to his father's wealth.

At college he met other lads more diligent than himself, who followed the plough in summer-time to pay their college fees in winter; and this inequality struck him with some force. He was at that age of a conversible temper, and insatiably curious in the aspects of life; and he spent much of his time scraping acquaintance with all classes of man- and woman-kind. In this way he came upon many depressed ambitions, and many intelligences stunted for want of opportunity; and this also struck him. He began to perceive that life was a handicap upon strange, wrong-sided principles; and not, as he had been told, a fair and equal race. He began to tremble that he himself had been unjustly favoured, when he saw all the avenues of wealth, and power, and comfort closed against so many of his superiors and equals, and held unwearyingly open before so idle, so desultory, and so dissolute a being as himself. There sat a youth beside him on the college benches who had only one shirt to his back, and, at intervals sufficiently far apart, must stay at home to have it washed. It was my friend's principle to stay away as often as he dared; for I fear he was no friend to learning. But there was something that came home to him sharply, in this fellow

who had to give over study till his shirt was washed, and the scores of others who had never an opportunity at all. *If one of these could take his place,* he thought; and the thought tore away a bandage from his eyes. He was eaten by the shame of his discoveries, and despised himself as an unworthy favourite and a creature of the back-stairs of Fortune. He could no longer see without confusion one of these brave young fellows battling up-hill against adversity. Had he not filched that fellow's birthright? At best was he not coldly profiting by the injustice of society, and greedily devouring stolen goods? The money, indeed, belonged to his father, who had worked, and thought, and given up his liberty to earn it; but by what justice could the money belong to my friend, who had, as yet, done nothing but help to squander it? A more sturdy honesty, joined to a more even and impartial temperament, would have drawn from these considerations a new force of industry, that this equivocal position might be brought as swiftly as possible to an end, and some good services to mankind justify the appropriation of expense. It was not so with my friend, who was only unsettled and discouraged, and filled full of that trumpeting anger with which young men regard injustices in the first blush of youth; although in a few years they will tamely acquiesce in their existence, and knowingly profit by their complications. Yet all this while he suffered many indignant pangs. And once, when he put on his boots, like any other unripe donkey, to run away from home, it was his best consolation that he was now, at a single plunge, to free himself from the responsibility of this wealth that was not his, and to battle equally against his fellows in the warfare of life.

Some time after this, falling into ill-health, he was sent at great expense to a more favourable climate; and then I think his perplexities were thickest. When he thought of all the other young men of singular promise, upright, good, the prop of families, who must remain at home to

die, and with all their possibilities be lost to life and mankind; and how he, by one more unmerited favour, was chosen out from all these others to survive; he felt as if there were no life, no labour, no devotion of soul and body, that could repay and justify these partialities. A religious lady, to whom he communicated these reflections, could see no force in them whatever. "It was God's will," said she. But he knew it was by God's will that Joan of Arc was burnt at Rouen, which cleared neither Bedford nor Bishop Cauchon; and again, by God's will that Christ was crucified outside Jerusalem, which excused neither the rancour of the priests nor the timidity of Pilate. He knew, moreover, that although the possibility of this favour he was now enjoying issued from his circumstances, its acceptance was the act of his own will; and he had accepted it greedily, longing for rest and sunshine. And hence this allegation of God's providence did little to relieve his scruples. I promise you he had a very troubled mind. And I would not laugh if I were you, though while he was thus making mountains out of what you think molehills, he were still (as perhaps he was) contentedly practising many other things that to you seem black as hell. Every man is his own judge and mountain-guide through life. There is an old story of a mote and a beam, apparently not true, but worthy perhaps of some consideration. I should, if I were you, give some consideration to these scruples of his, and if I were he, I should do the like by yours; for it is not unlikely that there may be something under both. In the meantime you must hear how my invalid acted. Like many invalids, he supposed that he would die. Now should he die, he saw no means of repaying this huge loan which, by the hands of his father, mankind had advanced him for his sickness. In that case it would be lost money. So he determined that the advance should be as small as possible; and, so long as he continued to doubt his recovery, lived in an upper room, and grudged himself all but necessaries. But so soon as he began to perceive a

change for the better, he felt justified in spending more freely, to speed and brighten his return to health, and trusted in the future to lend a help to mankind, as mankind, out of its treasury, had lent a help to him.

I do not say but that my friend was a little too curious and partial in his view; nor thought too much of himself and too little of his parents; but I do say that here are some scruples which tormented my friend in his youth, and still, perhaps, at odd times give him a prick in the midst of his enjoyments, and which after all have some foundation in justice, and point, in their confused way, to some honourable honesty within the reach of man. And at least, is not this an unusual gloss upon the eighth commandment? And what sort of comfort, guidance, or illumination did that precept afford my friend throughout these contentions? "Thou shalt not steal." With all my heart! But *am* I stealing?

The truly quaint materialism of our view of life disables us from pursuing any transaction to an end. You can make no one understand that his bargain is anything more than a bargain, whereas in point of fact it is a link in the policy of mankind, and either a good or an evil to the world. We have a sort of blindness which prevents us from seeing anything but sovereigns. If one man agrees to give another so many shillings for so many hours' work, and then wilfully gives him a certain proportion of the price in bad money and only the remainder in good, we can see with half an eye that this man is a thief. But if the other spends a certain proportion of the hours in smoking a pipe of tobacco, and a certain other proportion in looking at the sky, or the clock, or trying to recall an air, or in meditation on his own past adventures, and only the remainder in downright work such as he is paid to do, is he, because the theft is one of time and not of money,—is he any the less a thief? The one gave a bad shilling, the other an imperfect hour; but both broke the bargain, and each is a thief. In piecework, which is what most of

us do, the case is none the less plain for being even less material. If you forge a bad knife, you have wasted some of mankind's iron, and then, with unrivalled cynicism, you pocket some of mankind's money for your trouble. Is there any man so blind who cannot see that this is theft? Again, if you carelessly cultivate a farm, you have been playing fast and loose with mankind's resources against hunger; there will be less bread in consequence, and for lack of that bread somebody will die next winter: a grim consideration. And you must not hope to shuffle out of blame because you got less money for your less quantity of bread; for although a theft be partly punished, it is none the less a theft for that. You took the farm against competitors; there were others ready to shoulder the responsibility and be answerable for the tale of loaves; but it was you who took it. By the act you came under a tacit bargain with mankind to cultivate that farm with your best endeavour; you were under no superintendence, you were on parole; and you have broke your bargain, and to all who look closely, and yourself among the rest if you have moral eyesight, you are a thief. Or take the case of men of letters. Every piece of work which is not as good as you can make it, which you have palmed off imperfect, meagrely thought, niggardly in execution, upon mankind who is your paymaster on parole and in a sense your pupil, every hasty or slovenly or untrue performance, should rise up against you in the court of your own heart and condemn you for a thief. Have you a salary? If you trifle with your health, and so render yourself less capable for duty, and still touch, and still greedily pocket the emolument—what are you but a thief? Have you double accounts? do you by any time-honoured juggle, deceit, or ambiguous process, gain more from those who deal with you than if you were bargaining and dealing face to face in front of God?—What are you but a thief? Lastly, if you fill an office, or produce an article, which, in your heart of hearts, you think a delusion and a fraud upon

mankind, and still draw your salary and go through the sham manœuvres of this office, or still book your profits and keep on flooding the world with these injurious goods ? —though you were old, and bald, and the first at church, and a baronet, what are you but a thief ? These may seem hard words and mere curiosities of the intellect, in an age when the spirit of honesty is so sparingly cultivated that all business is conducted upon lies and so-called customs of the trade, that not a man bestows two thoughts on the utility or honourableness of his pursuit. I would say less if I thought less. But looking to my own reason and the right of things, I can only avow that I am a thief myself, and that I passionately suspect my neighbours of the same guilt.

Where did you hear that it was easy to be honest ? Do you find that in your Bible ? Easy ? It is easy to be an ass and follow the multitude like a blind, besotted bull in a stampede ; and that, I am well aware, is what you and Mrs. Grundy mean by being honest. But it will not bear the stress of time nor the scrutiny of conscience. Even before the lowest of all tribunals,—before a court of law, whose business it is, not to keep men right, or within a thousand miles of right, but to withhold them from going so tragically wrong that they will pull down the whole jointed fabric of society by their misdeeds—even before a court of law, as we begin to see in these last days, our easy view of following at each other's tails, alike to good and evil, is beginning to be reproved and punished, and declared no honesty at all, but open theft and swindling ; and simpletons who have gone on through life with a quiet conscience may learn suddenly, from the lips of a judge, that the custom of the trade may be a custom of the devil. You thought it was easy to be honest. Did you think it was easy to be just and kind and truthful ? Did you think the whole duty of aspiring man was as simple as a hornpipe ? and you could walk through life like a gentleman and a hero, with no more concern than it takes to go to church

or to address a circular? And yet all this time you had the eighth commandment! and, what makes it richer, you would not have broken it for the world!

The truth is, that these commandments by themselves are of little use in private judgment. If compression is what you want, you have their whole spirit compressed into the golden rule; and yet there expressed with more significance, since the law is there spiritually and not materially stated. And in truth, four out of these ten commands, from the sixth to the ninth, are rather legal than ethical. The police-court is their proper home. A magistrate cannot tell whether you love your neighbour as yourself, but he can tell more or less whether you have murdered, or stolen, or committed adultery, or held up your hand and testified to that which was not; and these things, for rough practical tests, are as good as can be found. And perhaps, therefore, the best condensation of the Jewish moral law is in the maxims of the priests, "neminem lædere" and "suum cuique tribunere." But all this granted, it becomes only the more plain that they are inadequate in the sphere of personal morality; that while they tell the magistrate roughly when to punish, they can never direct an anxious sinner what to do.

Only Polonius, or the like solemn sort of ass, can offer us a succinct proverb by way of advice, and not burst out blushing in our faces. We grant them one and all and for all that they are worth; it is something above and beyond that we desire. Christ was in general a great enemy to such a way of teaching; we rarely find Him meddling with any of these plump commands but it was to open them out, and lift His hearers from the letter to the spirit. For morals are a personal affair; in the war of righteousness every man fights for his own hand; all the six hundred precepts of the Mishna cannot shake my private judgment; my magistracy of myself is an indefeasible charge, and my decisions absolute for the time and case. The moralist is not a judge of appeal, but an advocate who pleads at my

tribunal. He has to show not the law, but that the law applies. Can he convince me? then he gains the cause. And thus you find Christ giving various counsels to varying people, and often jealously careful to avoid definite precept. Is He asked, for example, to divide a heritage? He refuses: and the best advice that He will offer is but a paraphrase of that tenth commandment which figures so strangely among the rest. *Take heed, and beware of covetousness.* If you complain that this is vague, I have failed to carry you along with me in my argument. For no definite precept can be more than an illustration, though its truth were resplendent like the sun, and it was announced from heaven by the voice of God. And life is so intricate and changing, that perhaps not twenty times, or perhaps not twice in the ages, shall we find that nice consent of circumstances to which alone it can apply.

CHAPTER III

Although the world and life have in a sense become commonplace to our experience, it is but in an external torpor ; the true sentiment slumbers within us ; and we have but to reflect on ourselves or our surroundings to rekindle our astonishment. No length of habit can blunt our first surprise. Of the world I have but little to say in this connection ; a few strokes shall suffice. We inhabit a dead ember swimming wide in the blank of space, dizzily spinning as it swims, and lighted up from several million miles away by a more horrible hell-fire than was ever conceived by the theological imagination. Yet the dead ember is a green, commodious dwelling-place ; and the reverberation of this hell-fire ripens flower and fruit and mildly warms us on summer eves upon the lawn. Far off on all hands other dead embers, other flaming suns, wheel and race in the apparent void ; the nearest is out of call, the farthest so far that the heart sickens in the effort to conceive the distance. Shipwrecked seamen on the deep, though they bestride but the truncheon of a boom, are safe and near at home compared with mankind on its bullet. Even to us who have known no other, it seems a strange, if not an appalling, place of residence.

But far stranger is the resident, man, a creature compact of wonders that, after centuries of custom, is still wonderful to himself. He inhabits a body which he is continually outliving, discarding, and renewing. Food and sleep, by an unknown alchemy, restore his spirits and the freshness of his countenance. Hair grows on him like grass ; his eyes, his brain, his sinews, thirst for action ; he joys to see and touch and hear, to partake the sun and

wind, to sit down and intently ponder on his astonishing attributes and situation, to rise up and run, to perform the strange and revolting round of physical functions. The sight of a flower, the note of a bird, will often move him deeply; yet he looks unconcerned on the impassable distances and portentous bonfires of the universe. He comprehends, he designs, he tames nature, rides the sea, ploughs, climbs the air in a balloon, makes vast inquiries, begins interminable labours, joins himself into federations and populous cities, spends his days to deliver the ends of the earth or to benefit unborn posterity; and yet knows himself for a piece of unsurpassed fragility and the creature of a few days. His sight, which conducts him, which takes notice of the farthest stars, which is miraculous in every way and a thing defying explanation or belief, is yet lodged in a piece of jelly, and can be extinguished with a touch. His heart, which all through life so indomitably, so athletically labours, is but a capsule, and may be stopped with a pin. His whole body, for all its savage energies, its leaping and its winged desires, may yet be tamed and conquered by a draught of air or a sprinkling of cold dew. What he calls death, which is the seeming arrest of everything, and the ruin and hateful transformation of the visible body, lies in wait for him outwardly in a thousand accidents, and grows up in secret diseases from within. He is still learning to be a man when his faculties are already beginning to decline; he has not yet understood himself or his position before he inevitably dies. And yet this mad, chimerical creature can take no thought of his last end, lives as though he were eternal, plunges with his vulnerable body into the shock of war, and daily affronts death with unconcern. He cannot take a step without pain or pleasure. His life is a tissue of sensations, which he distinguishes as they seem to come more directly from himself or his surroundings. He is conscious of himself as a joyer or a sufferer, as that which craves, chooses, and is satisfied; conscious of his surroundings as it were of an inexhaustible purveyor, the

source of aspects, inspirations, wonders, cruel knocks and transporting caresses. Thus he goes on his way, stumbling among delights and agonies.

Matter is a far-fetched theory, and materialism is without a root in man. To him everything is important in the degree to which it moves him. The telegraph wires and posts, the electricity speeding from clerk to clerk, the clerks, the glad or sorrowful import of the message, and the paper on which it is finally brought to him at home, are all equally facts, all equally exist for man. A word or a thought can wound him as acutely as a knife of steel. If he thinks he is loved, he will rise up and glory to himself, although he be in a distant land and short of necessary bread. Does he think he is not loved ?—he may have the woman at his beck, and there is not a joy for him in all the world. Indeed, if we are to make any account of this figment of reason, the distinction between material and immaterial, we shall conclude that the life of each man as an individual is immaterial, although the continuation and prospects of mankind as a race turn upon material conditions. The physical business of each man's body is transacted for him ; like a sybarite, he has attentive valets in his own viscera ; he breathes, he sweats, he digests without an effort, or so much as a consenting volition ; for the most part he even eats, not with a wakeful consciousness, but as it were between two thoughts. His life is centred among other and more important considerations ; touch him in his honour or his love, creatures of the imagination which attach him to mankind or to an individual man or woman ; cross him in his piety which connects his soul with heaven ; and he turns from his food, he loathes his breath, and with a magnanimous emotion cuts the knots of his existence and frees himself at a blow from the web of pains and pleasures.

It follows that man is twofold at least ; that he is not a rounded and autonomous empire ; but that in the same body with him there dwell other powers, tributary but

independent. If I now behold one walking in a garden curiously coloured and illuminated by the sun, digesting his food, with elaborate chemistry, breathing, circulating blood, directing himself by the sight of his eyes, accommodating his body by a thousand delicate balancings to the wind and the uneven surface of the path, and all the time, perhaps, with his mind engaged about America, or the dog-star, or the attributes of God—what am I to say, or how am I to describe the thing I see? Is that truly a man, in the rigorous meaning of the word? or is it not a man and something else? What, then, are we to count the centre-bit and axle of a being so variously compounded? It is a question much debated. Some read his history in a certain intricacy of nerve and the success of successive digestions; others find him an exiled piece of heaven blown upon and determined by the breath of God; and both schools of theorists will scream like scalded children at a word of doubt. Yet either of these views, however plausible, is beside the question; either may be right; and I care not; I ask a more particular answer, and to a more immediate point. What is the man? There is Something that was before hunger and that remains behind after a meal. It may or may not be engaged in any given act or passion, but when it is, it changes, heightens, and sanctifies. Thus it is not engaged in lust, where satisfaction ends the chapter; and it is engaged in love, where no satisfaction can blunt the edge of the desire, and where age, sickness, or alienation may deface what was desirable without diminishing the sentiment. This something, which is the man, is a permanence which abides through the vicissitudes of passion, now overwhelmed and now triumphant, now unconscious of itself in the immediate distress of appetite or pain, now rising unclouded above all. So, to the man, his own central self fades and grows clear again amid the tumult of the senses, like a revolving Pharos in the night. It is forgotten; it is hid, it seems, for ever; and yet in the next calm hour he shall behold himself

once more, shining and unmoved among changes and storm.

Mankind, in the sense of the creeping mass that is born and eats, that generates and dies, is but the aggregate of the outer and lower sides of man. This inner consciousness, this lantern alternately obscured and shining, to and by which the individual exists and must order his conduct, is something special to himself and not common to the race. His joys delight, his sorrows wound him, according as *this* is interested or indifferent in the affair : according as they arise in an imperial war or in a broil conducted by the tributary chieftains of the mind. He may lose all, and *this* not suffer ; he may lose what is materially a trifle, and *this* leap in his bosom with a cruel pang. I do not speak of it to hardened theorists : the living man knows keenly what it is I mean.

" Perceive at last that thou hast in thee something better and more divine than the things which cause the various effects, and, as it were, pull thee by the strings. What is that now in thy mind ? is it fear, or suspicion, or desire, or anything of that kind ? " Thus far Marcus Aurelius, in one of the most notable passages in any book. Here is a question worthy to be answered. What is in thy mind ? What is the utterance of your inmost self when, in a quiet hour, it can be heard intelligibly ? It is something beyond the compass of your thinking, inasmuch as it is yourself ; but is it not of a higher spirit than you had dreamed betweenwhiles, and erect above all base considerations ? This soul seems hardly touched with our infirmities ; we can find in it certainly no fear, suspicion, or desire ; we are only conscious—and that as though we read it in the eyes of some one else—of a great and unqualified readiness. A readiness to what ? to pass over and look beyond the objects of desire and fear, for something else. And this something else ? this something which is apart from desire and fear, to which all the kingdoms of the world and the immediate death of the body are alike

indifferent and beside the point, and which yet regards conduct—by what name are we to call it? It may be the love of God; or it may be an inherited (and certainly well concealed) instinct to preserve self and propagate the race; I am not, for the moment, averse to either theory; but it will save time to call it righteousness. By so doing I intend no subterfuge to beg a question; I am indeed ready, and more than willing, to accept the rigid consequence, and lay aside, as far as the treachery of the reason will permit, all former meanings attached to the word righteousness. What is right is that for which a man's central self is ever ready to sacrifice immediate or distant interests; what is wrong is what the central self discards or rejects as incompatible with the fixed design of righteousness.

To make this admission is to lay aside all hope of definition. That which is right upon this theory is intimately dictated to each man by himself, but can never be rigorously set forth in language, and never, above all, imposed upon another. The conscience has, then, a vision like that of the eyes, which is incommunicable, and for the most part illuminates none but its possessor. When many people perceive the same or any cognate facts, they agree upon a word as symbol; and hence we have such words as *tree*, *star*, *love*, *honour*, or *death*; hence also we have this word *right*, which, like the others, we all understand, most of us understand differently, and none can express succinctly otherwise. Yet even on the straitest view, we can make some steps towards comprehension of our own superior thoughts. For it is an incredible and most bewildering fact that a man, through life, is on variable terms with himself; he is aware of tiffs and reconciliations; the intimacy is at times almost suspended, at times it is renewed again with joy. As we said before, his inner self or soul appears to him by successive revelations, and is frequently obscured. It is from a study of these alternations that we can alone hope to discover, even dimly, what seems right and what seems wrong to this veiled prophet of ourself.

All that is in the man in the larger sense, what we call impression as well as what we call intuition, so far as my argument looks, we must accept. It is not wrong to desire food, or exercise, or beautiful surroundings, or the love of sex, or interest which is the food of the mind. All these are craved; all these should be craved; to none of these in itself does the soul demur; where there comes an undeniable want, we recognise a demand of nature. Yet we know that these natural demands may be superseded, for the demands which are common to mankind make but a shadowy consideration in comparison to the demands of the individual soul. Food is almost the first prerequisite; and yet a high character will go without food to the ruin and death of the body rather than gain it in a manner which the spirit disavows. Pascal laid aside mathematics; Origen doctored his body with a knife; every day some one is thus mortifying his dearest interests and desires, and, in Christ's words, entering maim into the Kingdom of Heaven. This is to supersede the lesser and less harmonious affections by renunciation; and though by this ascetic path we may get to heaven, we cannot get thither a whole and perfect man. But there is another way, to supersede them by reconciliation, in which the soul and all the faculties and senses pursue a common route and share in one desire. Thus, man is tormented by a very imperious physical desire; it spoils his rest, it is not to be denied; the doctors will tell you, not I, how it is a physical need, like the want of food or slumber. In the satisfaction of this desire, as it first appears, the soul sparingly takes part; nay, it oft unsparingly regrets and disapproves the satisfaction. But let the man learn to love a woman as far as he is capable of love; and for this random affection of the body there is substituted a steady determination, a consent of all his powers and faculties, which supersedes, adopts, and commands the other. The desire survives, strengthened, perhaps, but taught obedience, and changed in scope and character. Life is no longer a tale of betrayals and regrets;

for the man now lives as a whole ; his consciousness now moves on uninterrupted like a river ; through all the extremes and ups and downs of passion, he remains approvingly conscious of himself.

Now to me this seems a type of that rightness which the soul demands. It demands that we shall not live alternately with our opposing tendencies in continual see-saw of passion and disgust, but seek some path on which the tendencies shall no longer oppose, but serve each other to a common end. It demands that we shall not pursue broken ends, but great and comprehensive purposes, in which soul and body may unite like notes in a harmonious chord. That were indeed a way of peace and pleasure, that were indeed a heaven upon earth. It does not demand, however, or, to speak in measure, it does not demand of me, that I should starve my appetites for no purpose under heaven but as a purpose in itself ; or, in a weak despair, pluck out the eye that I have not yet learned to guide and enjoy with wisdom. The soul demands unity of purpose, not the dismemberment of man ; it seeks to roll up all his strength and sweetness, all his passion and wisdom, into one, and make of him a perfect man exulting in perfection. To conclude ascetically is to give up, and not to solve, the problem. The ascetic and the creeping hog, although they are at different poles, have equally failed in life. The one has sacrificed his crew ; the other brings back his seamen in a cock-boat, and has lost the ship. I believe there are not many sea-captains who would plume themselves on either result as a success.

But if it is righteousness thus to fuse together our divisive impulses and march with one mind through life, there is plainly one thing more unrighteous than all others, and one declension which is irretrievable and draws on the rest. And this is to lose consciousness of oneself. In the best of times, it is but by flashes, when our whole nature is clear, strong and conscious, and events conspire to leave us free, that we enjoy communion with our soul. At the

worst, we are so fallen and passive that we may say shortly we have none. An arctic torpor seizes upon men. Although built of nerves, and set adrift in a stimulating world, they develop a tendency to go bodily to sleep ; consciousness becomes engrossed among the reflex and mechanical parts of life ; and soon loses both the will and power to look higher considerations in the face. This is ruin ; this is the last failure in life ; this is temporal damnation ; damnation on the spot and without the form of judgment. " What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and *lose himself ?* "

It is to keep a man awake, to keep him alive to his own soul and its fixed design of righteousness, that the better part of moral and religious education is directed ; not only that of words and doctors, but the sharp ferule of calamity under which we are all God's scholars till we die. If, as teachers, we are to say anything to the purpose, we must say what will remind the pupil of his soul ; we must speak that soul's dialect ; we must talk of life and conduct as his soul would have him think of them. If, from some conformity between us and the pupil, or perhaps among all men, we do in truth speak in such a dialect and express such views, beyond question we shall touch in him a spring ; beyond question he will recognise the dialect as one that he himself has spoken in his better hours ; beyond question he will cry, " I had forgotten, but now I remember ; I too have eyes, and I had forgot to use them ! I too have a soul of my own, arrogantly upright, and to that I will listen and conform." In short, say to him anything that he has once thought, or been upon the point of thinking, or show him any view of life that he has once clearly seen, or been upon the point of clearly seeing ; and you have done your part and may leave him to complete the education for himself.

Now the view taught at the present time seems to me to want greatness ; and the dialect in which alone it can be intelligibly uttered is not the dialect of my soul. It is a sort of postponement of life ; nothing quite is, but some-

thing different is to be; we are to keep our eyes upon the indirect from the cradle to the grave. We are to regulate our conduct not by desire, but by a politic eye upon the future; and to value acts as they will bring us money or good opinion; as they will bring us, in one word, *profit*. We must be what is called respectable, and offend no one by our carriage; it will not do to make oneself conspicuous—who knows? even in virtue? says the Christian parent! And we must be what is called prudent and make money; not only because it is pleasant to have money, but because that also is a part of respectability, and we cannot hope to be received in society without decent possessions. Received in society! as if that were the kingdom of heaven! There is dear Mr. So-and-so; —look at him!—so much respected—so much looked up to—quite the Christian merchant! And we must cut our conduct as strictly as possible after the pattern of Mr. So-and-so; and lay our whole lives to make money and be strictly decent. Besides these holy injunctions, which form by far the greater part of a youth's training in our Christian homes, there are at least two other doctrines. We are to live just now as well as we can, but scrape at last into heaven, where we shall be good. We are to worry through the week in a lay, disreputable way, but, to make matters square, live a different life on Sunday.

The train of thought we have been following gives us a key to all these positions, without stepping aside to justify them on their own ground. It is because we have been disgusted fifty times with physical squalls and fifty times torn between conflicting impulses, that we teach people this indirect and tactical procedure in life, and to judge by remote consequences instead of the immediate face of things. The very desire to act as our own souls would have us, coupled with a pathetic disbelief in ourselves, moves us to follow the example of others; perhaps, who knows? they may be on the right track; and the more our patterns are in number, the better seems the chance;

until, if we be acting in concert with a whole civilised nation, there are surely a majority of chances that we must be acting right. And again, how true it is that we can never behave as we wish in this tormented sphere, and can only aspire to different and more favourable circumstances, in order to stand out and be ourselves wholly and rightly! And yet once more, if in the hurry and pressure of affairs and passions you tend to nod and become drowsy, here are twenty-four hours of Sunday set apart for you to hold counsel with your soul and look around you on the possibilities of life.

This is not, of course, all that is to be, or even should be, said for these doctrines. Only, in the course of this chapter, the reader and I have agreed upon a few catchwords, and been looking at morals on a certain system; it was a pity to lose an opportunity of testing the catchwords, and seeing whether, by this system as well as by others, current doctrines could show any probable justification. If the doctrines had come too badly out of the trial, it would have condemned the system. Our sight of the world is very narrow; the mind but a pedestrian instrument; there's nothing new under the sun, as Solomon says, except the man himself; and though that changes the aspect of everything else, yet he must see the same things as other people, only from a different side.

And now, having admitted so much, let us turn to criticism.

If you teach a man to keep his eyes upon what others think of him, unthinkingly to lead the life and hold the principles of the majority of his contemporaries, you must discredit in his eyes the one authoritative voice of his own soul. He may be a docile citizen; he will never be a man. It is ours, on the other hand, to disregard this babble and chattering of other men better and worse than we are, and to walk straight before us by what light we have. They may be right; but so, before heaven, are we. They may know; but we know also, and by that knowledge we must

stand or fall. There is such a thing as loyalty to a man's own better self; and from those who have not that, God help me, how am I to look for loyalty to others? The most dull, the most imbecile, at a certain moment turn round, at a certain point will hear no further argument, but stand unflinching by their own dumb, irrational sense of right. It is not only by steel or fire, but through contempt and blame, that the martyr fulfils the calling of his dear soul. Be glad if you are not tried by such extremities. But although all the world ranged themselves in one line to tell you "This is wrong," be you your own faithful vassal and the ambassador of God—throw down the glove and answer "This is right." Do you think you are only declaring yourself? Perhaps in some dim way, like a child who delivers a message not fully understood, you are opening wider the straits of prejudice and preparing mankind for some truer and more spiritual grasp of truth; perhaps, as you stand forth for your own judgment, you are covering a thousand weak ones with your body; perhaps, by this declaration alone, you have avoided the guilt of false witness against humanity and the little ones unborn. It is good, I believe, to be respectable, but much nobler to respect oneself and utter the voice of God. God, if there be any God, speaks daily in a new language by the tongues of men; the thoughts and habits of each fresh generation and each new-coined spirit throw another light upon the universe and contain another commentary on the printed Bibles; every scruple, every true dissent, every glimpse of something new, is a letter of God's alphabet; and though there is a grave responsibility for all who speak, is there none for those who unrighteously keep silence and conform? Is not that also to conceal and cloak God's counsel? And how should we regard the man of science who suppressed all facts that would not tally with the orthodoxy of the hour?

Wrong? You are as surely wrong as the sun rose this morning round the revolving shoulder of the world. Not

truth, but truthfulness, is the good of your endeavour. For when will men receive that first part and prerequisite of truth, that, by the order of things, by the greatness of the universe, by the darkness and partiality of man's experience, by the inviolate secrecy of God, kept close in His most open revelations, every man is, and to the end of the ages must be, wrong? Wrong to the universe; wrong to mankind; wrong to God. And yet in another sense, and that plainer and nearer, every man of men, who wishes truly, must be right. He is right to himself, and in the measure of his sagacity and candour. That let him do in all sincerity and zeal, not sparing a thought for contrary opinions; that, for what it is worth, let him proclaim. Be not afraid; although he be wrong, so also is the dead, stuffed Dagon he insults. For the voice of God, whatever it is, is not that stammering, inept tradition which the people holds. These truths survive in travesty, swamped in a world of spiritual darkness and confusion; and what a few comprehend and faithfully hold, the many, in their dead jargon, repeat, degrade, and misinterpret.

So far of Respectability: what the Covenanters used to call "rank conformity": the deadliest gag and wet blanket that can be laid on men. And now of Profit. And this doctrine is perhaps the more redoubtable, because it harms all sorts of men; not only the heroic and self-reliant, but the obedient, cowlike squadrons. A man, by this doctrine, looks to consequences at the second, or third, or fiftieth turn. He chooses his end, and for that, with wily turns and through a great sea of tedium, steers this mortal bark. There may be political wisdom in such a view; but I am persuaded there can spring no great moral zeal. To look thus obliquely upon life is the very recipe for moral slumber. Our intention and endeavour should be directed, not on some vague end of money or applause, which shall come to us by a ricochet in a month or a year, or twenty years, but on the act itself; not on the approval of others, but on the rightness of that act. At every

instant, at every step in life, the point has to be decided, our soul has to be saved, heaven has to be gained or lost. At every step our spirits must applaud, at every step we must set down the foot and sound the trumpet. "This have I done," we must say; "right or wrong, this have I done, in unfeigned honour of intention, as to myself and God." The profit of every act should be this, that it was right for us to do it. Any other profit than that, if it involved a kingdom or the woman I love, ought, if I were God's upright soldier, to leave me untempted.

It is the mark of what we call a righteous decision, that it is made directly and for its own sake. The whole man, mind and body, having come to an agreement, tyrannically dictates conduct. There are two dispositions eternally opposed: that in which we recognise that one thing is wrong and another right, and that in which, not seeing any clear distinction, we fall back on the consideration of consequences. The truth is, by the scope of our present teaching, nothing is thought very wrong and nothing very right, except a few actions which have the disadvantage of being disrespectable when found out; the more serious part of men inclining to think all things *rather wrong*, the more jovial to suppose them *right enough for practical purposes*. I will engage my head, they do not find that view in their own hearts; they have taken it up in a dark despair; they are but troubled sleepers talking in their sleep. The soul, or my soul at least, thinks very distinctly upon many points of right and wrong, and often differs flatly with what is held out as the thought of corporate humanity in the code of society or the code of law. Am I to suppose myself a monster? I have only to read books, the Christian Gospels for example, to think myself a monster no longer; and instead I think the mass of people are merely speaking in their sleep.

It is a commonplace, enshrined, if I mistake not, even in school copy-books, that honour is to be sought and not fame. I ask no other admission; we are to seek honour,

upright walking with our own conscience every hour of the day, and not fame, the consequence, the far-off reverberation of our footsteps. The walk, not the rumour of the walk, is what concerns righteousness. Better disrespectable honour than dishonourable fame. Better useless or seemingly hurtful honour, than dishonour ruling empires and filling the mouths of thousands. For the man must walk by what he sees, and leave the issue with God who made him and taught him by the fortune of his life. You would not dishonour yourself for money ; which is at least tangible ; would you do it, then, for a doubtful forecast in politics, or another person's theory in morals ?

So intricate is the scheme of our affairs, that no man can calculate the bearing of his own behaviour even on those immediately around him, how much less upon the world at large or on succeeding generations ! To walk by external prudence and the rule of consequences would require, not a man, but God. All that we know to guide us in this changing labyrinth is our soul with its fixed design of righteousness, and a few old precepts which commend themselves to that. The precepts are vague when we endeavour to apply them ; consequences are more entangled than a wisp of string, and their confusion is unrestingly in change ; we must hold to what we know and walk by it. We must walk by faith, indeed, and not by knowledge.

You do not love another because he is wealthy or wise or eminently respectable : you love him because you love him ; that is love, and any other only a derision and grimace. It should be the same with all our actions. If we were to conceive a perfect man, it should be one who was never torn between conflicting impulses, but who, on the absolute consent of all his parts and faculties, submitted in every action of his life to a self-dictation as absolute and unreasoned as that which bids him love one woman and be true to her till death. But we should not conceive him as sagacious, ascetical, playing off his appetites against each

other, turning the wing of public respectable immorality instead of riding it directly down, or advancing toward his end through a thousand sinister compromises and considerations. The one man might be wily, might be adroit, might be wise, might be respectable, might be gloriously useful ; it is the other man who would be good.

The soul asks honour and not fame ; to be upright, not to be successful ; to be good, not prosperous ; to be essentially, not outwardly, respectable. Does your soul ask profit ? Does it ask money ? Does it ask the approval of the indifferent herd ? I believe not. For my own part, I want but little money, I hope ; and I do not want to be decent at all, but to be good.

CHAPTER IV

We have spoken of that supreme self-dictation which keeps varying from hour to hour in its dictates with the variation of events and circumstances. Now, for us, that is ultimate. It may be founded on some reasonable process, but it is not a process which we can follow or comprehend. And moreover the dictation is not continuous, or not continuous except in very lively and well-living natures ; and betweenwhiles we must brush along without it. Practice is a more intricate and desperate business than the toughest theorising ; life is an affair of cavalry, where rapid judgment and prompt action are alone possible and right. As a matter of fact, there is no one so upright but he is influenced by the world's chatter ; and no one so headlong but he requires to consider consequences and to keep an eye on profit. For the soul adopts all affections and appetites without exception, and cares only to combine them for some common purpose which shall interest all. Now respect for the opinion of others, the study of consequences and the desire of power and comfort, are all undeniably factors in the nature of man ; and the more undeniably since we find that, in our current doctrines, they have swallowed up the others and are thought to conclude in themselves all the worthy parts of man. These, then, must also be suffered to affect conduct in the practical domain, much or little according as they are forcibly or feebly present to the mind of each.

Now a man's view of the universe is mostly a view of the civilised society in which he lives. Other men and women are so much more grossly and so much more intimately palpable to his perceptions, that they stand

between him and all the rest; they are larger to his eye than the sun, he hears them more plainly than thunder; with them, by them, and for them, he must live and die. And hence the laws that affect his intercourse with his fellow-men, although merely customary and the creatures of a generation, are more clearly and continually before his mind than those which bind him into the eternal system of things, support him in his upright progress on this whirling ball, or keep up the fire of his bodily life. And hence it is that money stands in the first rank of considerations and so powerfully affects the choice. For our society is built with money for mortar; money is present in every joint of circumstance; it might be named the social atmosphere, since, in society, it is by that alone men continue to live, and only through that or chance that they can reach or affect one another. Money gives us food, shelter, and privacy; it permits us to be clean in person, opens for us the doors of the theatre, gains us books for study or pleasure, enables us to help the distresses of others, and puts us above necessity so that we can choose the best in life. If we love, it enables us to meet and live with the loved one, or even to prolong her health and life; if we have scruples, it gives us an opportunity to be honest; if we have any bright designs, here is what will smooth the way to their accomplishment. Penury is the worst slavery, and will soon lead to death.

But money is only a means; it presupposes a man to use it. The rich can go where he pleases, but perhaps please himself nowhere. He can buy a library or visit the whole world, but perhaps has neither patience to read nor intelligence to see. The table may be loaded and the appetite wanting; the purse may be full and the heart empty. He may have gained the world and lost himself; and with all his wealth around him, in a great house and spacious and beautiful demesne, he may live as blank a life as any tattered ditcher. Without an appetite, without

an aspiration, void of appreciation, bankrupt of desire and hope, there, in his great house, let him sit and look upon his fingers. It is perhaps a more fortunate destiny to have a taste for collecting shells than to be born a millionaire. Although neither is to be despised, it is always better policy to learn an interest than to make a thousand pounds; for the money will soon be spent, or perhaps you may feel no joy in spending it; but the interest remains imperishable and ever new. To become a botanist, a geologist, a social philosopher, an antiquary, or an artist, is to enlarge one's possessions in the universe by an incalculably higher degree, and by a far surer sort of property, than to purchase a farm of many acres. You had perhaps two thousand a year before the transaction; perhaps you have two thousand five hundred after it. That represents your gain in the one case. But in the other, you have thrown down a barrier which concealed significance and beauty. The blind man has learned to see. The prisoner has opened up a window in his cell and beholds enchanting prospects; he will never again be a prisoner as he was; he can watch clouds and changing seasons, ships on the river, travellers on the road, and the stars at night; happy prisoner! his eyes have broken gaol! And again he who has learned to love an art or science has wisely laid up riches against the day of riches; if prosperity come, he will not enter poor into his inheritance; he will not slumber and forget himself in the lap of money, or spend his hours in counting idle treasures, but be up and briskly doing; he will have the true alchemic touch, which is not that of Midas, but which transmutes dead money into living delight and satisfaction. *Être et pas avoir*—to be, not to possess—that is the problem of life. To be wealthy, a rich nature is the first requisite and money but the second. To be of a quick and healthy blood, to share in all honourable curiosities, to be rich in admiration and free from envy, to rejoice greatly in the good of others, to love with such generosity of heart that your love is still a dear possession

in absence or unkindness—these are the gifts of fortune which money cannot buy and without which money can buy nothing. For what can a man possess, or what can he enjoy, except himself? If he enlarge his nature, it is then that he enlarges his estates. If his nature be happy and valiant, he will enjoy the universe as if it were his park and orchard.

But money is not only to be spent; it has also to be earned. It is not merely a convenience or a necessary in social life; but it is the coin in which mankind pays his wages to the individual man. And from this side, the question of money has a very different scope and application. For no man can be honest who does not work. Service for service. If the farmer buys corn, and the labourer ploughs and reaps, and the baker sweats in his hot bakery, plainly you who eat must do something in your turn. It is not enough to take off your hat, or to thank God upon your knees for the admirable constitution of society and your own convenient situation in its upper and more ornamental stories. Neither is it enough to buy the loaf with a sixpence; for then you are only changing the point of the inquiry; and you must first have *bought the sixpence.* Service for service: how have you bought your sixpences? A man of spirit desires certainty in a thing of such a nature; he must see to it that there is some reciprocity between him and mankind; that he pays his expenditure in service; that he has not a lion's share in profit and a drone's in labour; and is not a sleeping partner and mere costly incubus on the great mercantile concern of mankind.

Services differ so widely with different gifts, and some are so inappreciable to external tests, that this is not only a matter for the private conscience, but one which even there must be leniently and trustfully considered. For remember how many serve mankind who do no more than meditate; and how many are precious to their friends for no more than a sweet and joyous temper. To perform the

function of a man of letters it is not necessary to write ; nay, it is perhaps better to be a living book. So long as we love we serve ; so long as we are loved by others, I would almost say that we are indispensable ; and no man is useless while he has a friend. The true services of life are inestimable in money, and are never paid. Kind words and caresses, high and wise thoughts, humane designs, tender behaviour to the weak and suffering, and all the charities of man's existence, are neither bought nor sold.

Yet the dearest and readiest, if not the most just, criterion of a man's services, is the wage that mankind pays him, or, briefly, what he earns. There at least there can be no ambiguity. St. Paul is fully and freely entitled to his earnings as a tentmaker, and Socrates fully and freely entitled to his earnings as a sculptor, although the true business of each was not only something different, but something which remained unpaid. A man cannot forget that he is not superintended, and serves mankind on parole. He would like, when challenged by his own conscience, to reply : " I have done so much work, and no less, with my own hands and brain, and taken so much profit, and no more, for my own personal delight." And though St. Paul, if he had possessed a private fortune, would probably have scorned to waste his time in making tents, yet of all sacrifices to public opinion none can be more easily pardoned than that by which a man, already spiritually useful to the world, should restrict the field of his chief usefulness to perform services more apparent, and possess a livelihood that neither stupidity nor malice could call in question. Like all sacrifices to public opinion and mere external decency, this would certainly be wrong ; for the soul should rest contented with its own approval and indissuadably pursue its own calling. Yet, so grave and delicate is the question, that a man may well hesitate before he decides it for himself ; he may well fear that he sets too high a valuation on his own endeavours after good ; he may well

condescend upon a humbler duty, where others than himself shall judge the service and proportion the wage.

And yet it is to this very responsibility that the rich are born. They can shuffle off the duty on no other ; they are their own paymasters on parole ; and must pay themselves fair wages and no more. For I suppose that in the course of ages, and through reform and civil war and invasion, mankind was pursuing some other and more general design than to set one or two Englishmen of the nineteenth century beyond the reach of needs and duties. Society was scarce put together, and defended with so much eloquence and blood, for the convenience of two or three millionaires and a few hundred other persons of wealth and position. It is plain that if mankind thus acted and suffered during all these generations, they hoped some benefit, some ease, some well-being, for themselves and their descendants ; that if they supported law and order, it was to secure fair-play for all ; that if they denied themselves in the present, they must have had some designs upon the future. Now a great hereditary fortune is a miracle of man's wisdom and mankind's forbearance ; it has not only been amassed and handed down, it has been suffered to be amassed and handed down ; and surely in such a consideration as this, its possessor should find only a new spur to activity and honour, that with all this power of service he should not prove unserviceable, and that this mass of treasure should return in benefits upon the race. If he had twenty, or thirty, or a hundred thousand at his banker's, or if all Yorkshire or all California were his to manage or to sell, he would still be morally penniless, and have the world to begin like Whittington, until he had found some way of serving mankind. His wage is physically in his own hand ; but, in honour, that wage must still be earned. He is only steward on parole of what is called his fortune. He must honourably perform his stewardship. He must estimate his own services and allow himself a salary in proportion, for that will be one among his functions.

And while he will then be free to spend that salary, great or little, on his own private pleasures, the rest of his fortune he but holds and disposes under trust for mankind; it is not his, because he has not earned it; it cannot be his, because his services have already been paid; but year by year it is his to distribute, whether to help individuals whose birthright and outfit have been swallowed up in his, or to further public works and institutions.

At this rate, short of inspiration, it seems hardly possible to be both rich and honest; and the millionaire is under a far more continuous temptation to thieve than the labourer who gets his shilling daily for despicable toils. Are you surprised? It is even so. And you repeat it every Sunday in your churches. "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." I have heard this and similar texts ingeniously explained away and brushed from the path of the aspiring Christian by the tender Greatheart of the parish. One excellent clergyman told us that the "eye of a needle" meant a low, Oriental postern through which camels could not pass till they were unloaded—which is very likely just; and then went on, bravely confounding the "kingdom of God" with heaven, the future paradise, to show that of course no rich person could expect to carry his riches beyond the grave—which, of course, he could not and never did. Various greedy sinners of the congregation drank in the comfortable doctrine with relief. It was worth the while having come to church that Sunday morning! All was plain. The Bible, as usual, meant nothing in particular; it was merely an obscure and figurative school-copybook; and if a man were only respectable, he was a man after God's own heart.

Alas! I fear not. And though this matter of a man's services is one for his own conscience, there are some cases in which it is difficult to restrain the mind from judging. Thus I shall be very easily persuaded that a man has earned his daily bread; and if he has but a friend or two

to whom his company is delightful at heart, I am more than persuaded at once. But it will be very hard to persuade me that any one has earned an income of a hundred thousand. What he is to his friends, he still would be if he were made penniless to-morrow; for as to the courtiers of luxury and power, I will neither consider them friends, nor indeed consider them at all. What he does for mankind there are most likely hundreds who would do the same, as effectually for the race and as pleasurably to themselves, for the merest fraction of this monstrous wage. Why it is paid, I am, therefore, unable to conceive, and as the man pays it himself, out of funds in his detention, I have a certain backwardness to think him honest.

At least, we have gained a very obvious point: that *what a man spends upon himself he shall have earned by services to the race.* Thence flows a principle for the outset of life, which is a little different from that taught in the present day. I am addressing the middle and the upper classes; those who have already been fostered and prepared for life at some expense; those who have some choice before them, and can pick professions; and above all, those who are what is called independent, and need do nothing unless pushed by honour or ambition. In this particular the poor are happy; among them, when a lad comes to his strength, he must take the work that offers, and can take it with an easy conscience. But in the richer classes the question is complicated by the number of opportunities and a variety of considerations. Here, then, this principle of ours comes in helpfully. The young man has to seek, not a road to wealth, but an opportunity of service; not money, but honest work. If he has some strong propensity, some calling of nature, some overweening interest in any special field of industry, inquiry, or art, he will do right to obey the impulse; and that for two reasons: the first external, because there he will render the best services; the second personal, because a demand of his own nature is to him without appeal whenever it can be satisfied with

the consent of his other faculties and appetites. If he has no such elective taste, by the very principle on which he chooses any pursuit at all he must choose the most honest and serviceable, and not the most highly remunerated. We have here an external problem, not from or to ourself, but flowing from the constitution of society ; and we have our own soul with its fixed design of righteousness. All that can be done is to present the problem in proper terms and leave it to the soul of the individual. Now the problem to the poor is one of necessity : to earn wherewithal to live, they must find remunerative labour. But the problem to the rich is one of honour : having the wherewithal, they must find serviceable labour. Each has to earn his daily bread : the one, because he has not yet got it to eat ; the other, who has already eaten it, because he has not yet earned it.

Of course, what is true of bread is true of luxuries and comforts, whether for the body or the mind. But the consideration of luxuries leads us to a new aspect of the whole question, and to a second proposition no less true, and maybe no less startling, than the last.

At the present day, we, of the easier classes, are in a state of surfeit and disgrace after meat. Plethora has filled us with indifference ; and we are covered from head to foot with the callosities of habitual opulence. Born into what is called a certain rank, we live, as the saying is, up to our station. We squander without enjoyment, because our fathers squandered. We eat of the best, not from delicacy, but from brazen habit. We do not keenly enjoy or eagerly desire the presence of a luxury ; we are unaccustomed to its absence. And not only do we squander money from habit, but still more pitifully waste it in ostentation. I can think of no more melancholy disgrace for a creature who professes either reason or pleasure for his guide, than to spend the smallest fraction of his income upon that which he does not desire ; and to keep a carriage in which you do not wish to drive, or a butler of whom you are afraid,

is a pathetic kind of folly. Money, being a means of happiness, should make both parties happy when it changes hands; rightly disposed, it should be twice blessed in its employment; and buyer and seller should alike have their twenty shillings' worth of profit out of every pound. Benjamin Franklin went through life an altered man, because he once paid too dearly for a penny whistle. My concern springs usually from a deeper source, to wit, from having bought a whistle when I did not want one. I find I regret this, or would regret it if I gave myself the time, not only on personal but on moral and philanthropical considerations. For, first, in a world where money is wanting to buy books for eager students and food and medicine for pining children, and where a large majority are starved in their most immediate desires, it is surely base, stupid, and cruel to squander money when I am pushed by no appetite and enjoy no return of genuine satisfaction. My philanthropy is wide enough in scope to include myself; and when I have made myself happy, I have at least one good argument that I have acted rightly; but where that is not so, and I have bought and not enjoyed, my mouth is closed, and I conceive that I have robbed the poor. And, second, anything I buy or use which I do not sincerely want or cannot vividly enjoy, disturbs the balance of supply and demand, and contributes to remove industrious hands from the production of what is useful or pleasurable and to keep them busy upon ropes of sand and things that are a weariness to the flesh. That extravagance is truly sinful, and a very silly sin to boot, in which we impoverish mankind and ourselves. It is another question for each man's heart. He knows if he can enjoy what he buys and uses; if he cannot, he is a dog in the manger; nay, if he cannot, I contend he is a thief, for nothing really belongs to a man which he cannot use. Proprietor is connected with propriety; and that only is the man's which is proper to his wants and faculties.

A youth, in choosing a career, must not be alarmed

by poverty. Want is a sore thing, but poverty does not imply want. It remains to be seen whether with half his present income, or a third, he cannot, in the most generous sense, live as fully as at present. He is a fool who objects to luxuries; but he is also a fool who does not protest against the waste of luxuries on those who do not desire and cannot enjoy them. It remains to be seen, by each man who would live a true life to himself and not a merely specious life to society, how many luxuries he truly wants and to how many he merely submits as to a social propriety; and all these last he will immediately forswear. Let him do this, and he will be surprised to find how little money it requires to keep him in complete contentment and activity of mind and senses. Life at any level among the easy classes is conceived upon a principle of rivalry, where each man and each household must ape the tastes and emulate the display of others. One is delicate in eating, another in wine, a third in furniture or works of art or dress; and I, who care nothing for any of these refinements, who am perhaps a plain athletic creature and love exercise, beef, beer, flannel shirts and a camp bed, am yet called upon to assimilate all these other tastes and make these foreign occasions of expenditure my own. It may be cynical: I am sure I shall be told it is selfish; but I will spend my money as I please and for my own intimate personal gratification, and should count myself a nincompoop indeed to lay out the colour of a halfpenny on any fancied social decency or duty. I shall not wear gloves unless my hands are cold, or unless I am born with a delight in them. Dress is my own affair, and that of one other in the world; that, in fact, and for an obvious reason, of any woman who shall chance to be in love with me. I shall lodge where I have a mind. If I do not ask society to live with me, they must be silent; and even if I do, they have no further right but to refuse the invitation.

There is a kind of idea abroad that a man must live up to his station, that his house, his table, and his toilette,

shall be in a ratio of equivalence, and equally imposing to the world. If this is in the Bible, the passage has eluded my inquiries. If it is not in the Bible, it is nowhere but in the heart of the fool. Throw aside this fancy. See what you want, and spend upon that; distinguish what you do not care about, and spend nothing upon that. There are not many people who can differentiate wines above a certain and that not at all a high price. Are you sure you are one of these? Are you sure you prefer cigars at sixpence each to pipes at some fraction of a farthing? Are you sure you wish to keep a gig? Do you care about where you sleep, or are you not as much at your ease in a cheap lodging as in an Elizabethan manor-house? Do you enjoy fine clothes? It is not possible to answer these questions without a trial; and there is nothing more obvious to my mind, than that a man who has not experienced some ups and downs, and been forced to live more cheaply than in his father's house, has still his education to begin. Let the experiment be made, and he will find to his surprise that he has been eating beyond his appetite up to that hour; that the cheap lodging, the cheap tobacco, the rough country clothes, the plain table, have not only no power to damp his spirits, but perhaps give him as keen pleasure in the using as the dainties that he took, betwixt sleep and waking, in his former callous and somnambulous submission to wealth.

The true Bohemian, a creature lost to view under the imaginary Bohemians of literature, is exactly described by such a principle of life. The Bohemian of the novel, who drinks more than is good for him and prefers anything to work, and wears strange clothes, is for the most part a respectable Bohemian, respectable in disrespectability, living for the outside, and an adventurer. But the man I mean lives wholly to himself, does what he wishes, and not what is thought proper, buys what he wants for himself and not what is thought proper, works at what he believes he can do well and not what will bring him in money or

favour. You may be the most respectable of men, and yet a true Bohemian. And the test is this: a Bohemian, for as poor as he may be, is always open-handed to his friends; he knows what he can do with money and how he can do without it, a far rarer and more useful knowledge; he has had less, and continued to live in some contentment; and hence he cares not to keep more, and shares his sovereign or his shilling with a friend. The poor, if they are generous, are Bohemian in virtue of their birth. Do you know where beggars go? Not to the great houses where people sit dazed among their thousands, but to the doors of poor men who have seen the world; and it was the widow who had only two mites, who cast half her fortune into the treasury.

But a young man who elects to save on dress or on lodging, or who in any way falls out of the level of expenditure which is common to his level in society, falls out of society altogether. I suppose the young man to have chosen his career on honourable principles; he finds his talents and instincts can be best contented in a certain pursuit; in a certain industry, he is sure that he is serving mankind with a healthy and becoming service; and he is not sure that he would be doing so, or doing so equally well, in any other industry within his reach. Then that is his true sphere in life; not the one in which he was born to his father, but the one which is proper to his talents and instincts. And suppose he does fall out of society, is that a cause of sorrow? Is your heart so dead that you prefer the recognition of many to the love of a few? Do you think society loves you? Put it to the proof. Decline in material expenditure, and you will find they care no more for you than for the Khan of Tartary. You will lose no friends. If you had any, you will keep them. Only those who were friends to your coat and equipage will disappear; the smiling faces will disappear as by enchantment; but the kind hearts will remain steadfastly kind. Are you so lost, are you so dead, are you so little sure of

your own soul and your own footing upon solid fact, that you prefer before goodness and happiness the countenance of sundry diners-out, who will flee from you at a report of ruin, who will drop you with insult at a shadow of disgrace, who do not know you and do not care to know you but by sight, and whom you in your turn neither know nor care to know in a more human manner? Is it not the principle of society, openly avowed, that friendship must not interfere with business; which being paraphrased, means simply that a consideration of money goes before any consideration of affection known to this cold-blooded gang, that they have not even the honour of thieves, and will rook their nearest and dearest as readily as a stranger? I hope I would go as far as most to serve a friend; but I declare openly I would not put on my hat to do a pleasure to society. I may starve my appetites and control my temper for the sake of those I love; but society shall take me as I choose to be, or go without me. Neither they nor I will lose; for where there is no love, it is both laborious and unprofitable to associate.

But it is obvious that if it is only right for a man to spend money on that which he can truly and thoroughly enjoy, the doctrine applies with equal force to the rich and to the poor, to the man who has amassed many thousands as well as to the youth precariously beginning life. And it may be asked, Is not this merely preparing misers, who are not the best of company? But the principle was this: that which a man has not fairly earned, and, further, that which he cannot fully enjoy, does not belong to him, but is a part of mankind's treasure which he holds as steward on parole. To mankind, then, it must be made profitable; and how this should be done is, once more, a problem which each man must solve for himself, and about which none has a right to judge him. Yet there are a few considerations which are very obvious and may here be stated. Mankind is not only the whole in general, but every one in particular. Every man or woman is one of

mankind's dear possessions; to his or her just brain, and kind heart, and active hands, mankind intrusts some of its hopes for the future; he or she is a possible well-spring of good acts and source of blessings to the race. This money which you do not need, which, in a rigid sense, you do not want, may therefore be returned not only in public benefactions to the race, but in private kindnesses. Your wife, your children, your friends stand nearest to you, and should be helped the first. There at least there can be little imposture, for you know their necessities of your own knowledge. And consider, if all the world did as you did, and according to their means extended help in the circle of their affections, there would be no more crying want in times of plenty and no more cold, mechanical charity given with a doubt and received with confusion. Would not this simple rule make a new world out of the old and cruel one which we inhabit?

[*After two more sentences the fragment breaks off.*]

PRAYERS

WRITTEN FOR FAMILY USE AT VAILIMA

PRAYERS

WRITTEN FOR FAMILY USE AT VAILIMA

For Success

LORD, behold our family here assembled. We thank Thee for this place in which we dwell; for the love that unites us; for the peace accorded us this day; for the hope with which we expect the morrow; for the health, the work, the food, and the bright skies, that make our lives delightful; for our friends in all parts of the earth, and our friendly helpers in this foreign isle. Let peace abound in our small company. Purge out of every heart the lurking grudge. Give us grace and strength to forbear and to persevere. Offenders, give us the grace to accept and to forgive offenders. Forgetful ourselves, help us to bear cheerfully the forgetfulness of others. Give us courage and gaiety and the quiet mind. Spare to us our friends, soften to us our enemies. Bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavours. If it may not, give us the strength to encounter that which is to come, that we be brave in peril, constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath, and in all changes of fortune, and down to the gates of death, loyal and loving one to another. As the clay to the potter, as the windmill to the wind, as children of their sire, we beseech of Thee this help and mercy for Christ's sake.

For Grace

GRANT that we here before Thee may be set free from the fear of vicissitude and the fear of death, may finish what

remains before us of our course without dishonour to ourselves or hurt to others, and, when the day comes, may die in peace. Deliver us from fear and favour: from mean hopes and cheap pleasures. Have mercy on each in his deficiency; let him be not cast down; support the stumbling on the way, and give at last rest to the weary.

At Morning

THE day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to play the man, help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces, let cheerfulness abound with industry. Give us to go blithely on our business all this day, bring us to our resting beds weary and content and undishonoured, and grant us in the end the gift of sleep.

Evening

WE come before Thee, O Lord, in the end of Thy day with thanksgiving.

Our beloved in the far parts of the earth, those who are now beginning the labours of the day what time we end them, and those with whom the sun now stands at the point of noon, bless, help, console, and prosper them.

Our guard is relieved, the service of the day is over, and the hour come to rest. We resign into Thy hands our sleeping bodies, our cold hearths and open doors. Give us to awake with smiles, give us to labour smiling. As the sun returns in the east, so let our patience be renewed with dawn; as the sun lightens the world, so let our loving-kindness make bright this house of our habitation.

Another for Evening

LORD, receive our supplications for this house, family, and country. Protect the innocent, restrain the greedy and

the treacherous, lead us out of our tribulation into a quiet land.

Look down upon ourselves and upon our absent dear ones. Help us and them ; prolong our days in peace and honour. Give us health, food, bright weather, and light hearts. In what we meditate of evil, frustrate our will ; in what of good, further our endeavours. Cause injuries to be forgot and benefits to be remembered.

Let us lie down without fear and awake and arise with exultation. For His sake, in whose words we now conclude.

In Time of Rain

We thank Thee, Lord, for the glory of the late days and the excellent face of Thy sun. We thank Thee for good news received. We thank Thee for the pleasures we have enjoyed and for those we have been able to confer. And now, when the clouds gather and the rain impends over the forest and our house, permit us not to be cast down ; let us not lose the savour of past mercies and past pleasures ; but, like the voice of a bird singing in the rain, let grateful memory survive in the hour of darkness. If there be in front of us any painful duty, strengthen us with the grace of courage ; if any act of mercy, teach us tenderness and patience.

Another in Time of Rain

Lord, Thou sendest down rain upon the uncounted millions of the forest, and givest the trees to drink exceedingly. We are here upon this isle a few handfuls of men, and how many myriads upon myriads of stalwart trees ! Teach us the lesson of the trees. The sea around us, which this rain recruits, teems with the race of fish ; teach us, Lord, the meaning of the fishes. Let us see ourselves for what we are, one out of the countless number of the clans of Thy handiwork. When we would despair, let us remember that these also please and serve Thee.

Before a Temporary Separation

To-day we go forth separate, some of us to pleasure, some of us to worship, some upon duty. Go with us, our guide and angel; hold Thou before us in our divided paths the mark of our low calling, still to be true to what small best we can attain to. Help us in that, our maker, the dispenser of events—Thou, of the vast designs, in which we blindly labour, suffer us to be so far constant to ourselves and our beloved.

For Friends

For our absent loved ones we implore Thy loving-kindness. Keep them in life, keep them in growing honour; and for us, grant that we remain worthy of their love. For Christ's sake, let not our beloved blush for us, nor we for them. Grant us but that, and grant us courage to endure lesser ills unshaken, and to accept death, loss, and disappointment as it were straws upon the tide of life.

For the Family

Aid us, if it be Thy will, in our concerns. Have mercy on this land and innocent people. Help them who this day contend in disappointment with their frailties. Bless our family, bless our forest house, bless our island helpers. Thou who hast made for us this place of ease and hope, accept and inflame our gratitude; help us to repay, in service one to another, the debt of Thine unmerited benefits and mercies, so that when the period of our stewardship draws to a conclusion, when the windows begin to be darkened, when the bond of the family is to be loosed, there shall be no bitterness of remorse in our farewells.

Help us to look back on the long way that Thou hast brought us, on the long days in which we have been served not according to our deserts but our desires; on the pit and the miry clay, the blackness of despair, the horror of misconduct, from which our feet have been plucked out.

For our sins forgiven or prevented, for our shame unpublished, we bless and thank Thee, O God. Help us yet again and ever. So order events, so strengthen our frailty, as that day by day we shall come before Thee with this song of gratitude, and in the end we be dismissed with honour. In their weakness and their fear, the vessels of Thy handiwork so pray to Thee, so praise Thee. Amen.

Sunday

We beseech Thee, Lord, to behold us with favour, folk of many families and nations gathered together in the peace of this roof, weak men and women subsisting under the covert of Thy patience. Be patient still; suffer us yet a while longer;—with our broken purposes of good, with our idle endeavours against evil, suffer us a while longer to endure, and (if it may be) help us to do better. Bless to us our extraordinary mercies; if the day come when these must be taken, brace us to play the man under affliction. Be with our friends, be with ourselves. Go with each of us to rest; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns, return to us, our sun and comforter, and call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts—eager to labour—eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion—and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it.

We thank Thee and praise Thee; and in the words of Him to whom this day is sacred, close our oblation.

For Self-blame

Lord, enlighten us to see the beam that is in our own eye, and blind us to the mote that is in our brother's. Let us feel our offences with our hands, make them great and bright before us like the sun, make us eat them and drink them for our diet. Blind us to the offences of our beloved, cleanse them from our memories, take them out of our mouths for ever. Let all here before Thee carry and

measure with the false balances of love, and be in their own eyes and in all conjunctures the most guilty. Help us at the same time with the grace of courage, that we be none of us cast down when we sit lamenting amid the ruins of our happiness or our integrity: touch us with fire from the altar, that we may be up and doing to rebuild our city: in the name and by the method of Him in whose words of prayer we now conclude.

For Self-forgetfulness

LORD, the creatures of Thy hand, Thy disinherited children, come before Thee with their incoherent wishes and regrets: Children we are, children we shall be, till our mother the earth hath fed upon our bones. Accept us, correct us, guide us, Thy guilty innocents. Dry our vain tears, wipe out our vain resentments, help our yet vainer efforts. If there be any here, sulking as children will, deal with and enlighten him. Make it day about that person, so that he shall see himself and be ashamed. Make it heaven about him, Lord, by the only way to heaven, forgetfulness of self, and make it day about his neighbours, so that they shall help, not hinder him.

For Renewal of Joy

WE are evil, O God, and help us to see it and amend. We are good, and help us to be better. Look down upon Thy servants with a patient eye, even as Thou sendest sun and rain; look down, call upon the dry bones, quicken, enliven; re-create in us the soul of service, the spirit of peace; renew in us the sense of joy.

END OF VOL. XVI

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